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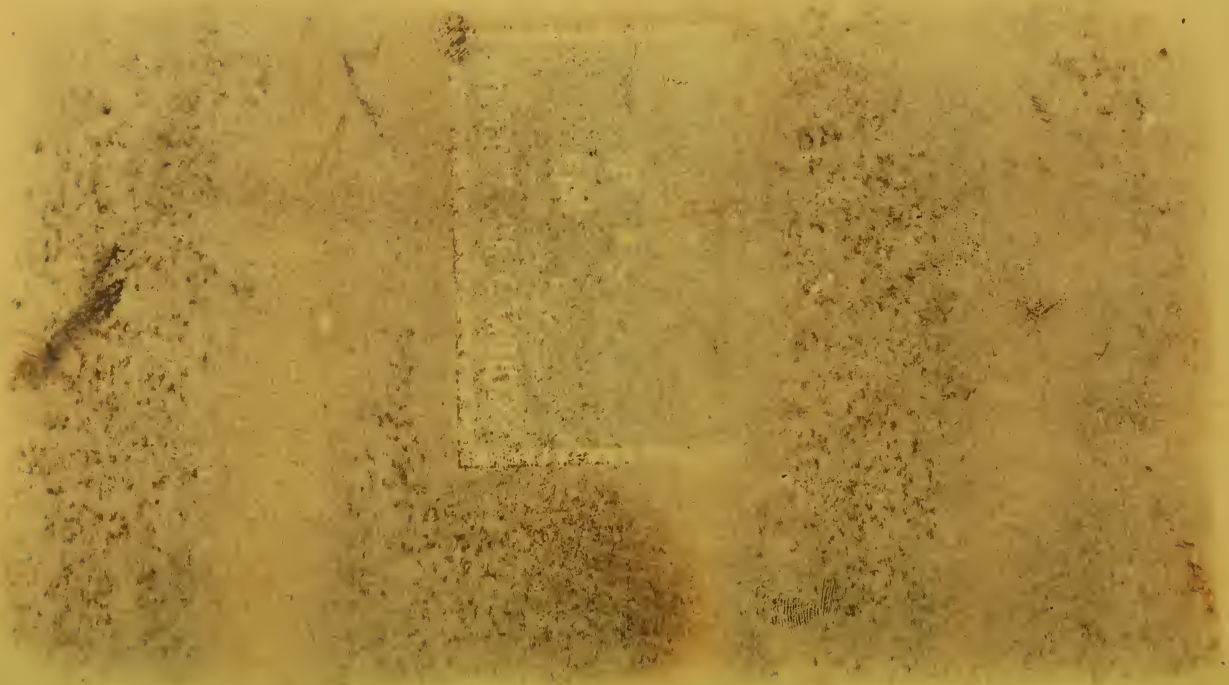

A CHURCH HISTORY.

A

CHURCH HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST THREE CENTURIES,

FROM THE

THIRTIETH TO THE THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA:

BY

MILO MAHAN, D. D.,

S. MARK'S-IN-THE-BOWERY PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY DANIEL DANA, JR.,
381 BROADWAY.
1860.

BR165
.M25

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860,
By Daniel Dana, Jr.,
In the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

NEW YORK:
BILLIN AND BROTHER, PRINTERS,
XX, NORTH WILLIAM ST.

PREFACE.

The following History is intended chiefly for the use of the general reader; with a view to whom, results are given rather than learned disquisitions, and the references are made as far as possible to authorities easily accessible.

It is hoped that it will also be found a help to young students and candidates for Holy Orders. In the case of such, however, it is taken for granted that Eusebius is close at hand; and at least one good text-book such as Gieseler's Church History, which, especially as arranged in Smith's American Edition, is invaluable for its exact and copious citations, and for its excellent bibliographical apparatus. Its principal defect is one incidental to all text-books; namely, that it *anatomizes* the body of Church History to the prejudice of its life—giving an aggregation of facts nicely arranged and labelled, instead of that living flow of events in their natural order by which (according to the maxim, *solvitur ambulando*) history explains and justifies itself. It is hoped that the present volume, by following as far as possible the narrative form, and by distinguishing the development of Church life in individuals, in Schools, and finally in the great Provincial Churches, will help to supply this deficiency, and facilitate the profoundly interesting and comprehensive study to which it is offered as an humble contribution.

The author's obligations to the innumerable laborers who have preceded him in this field it would be only tedious to express. As Dr. Schaff, however, is one of the most recent among these,

and is sometimes referred to in this volume with expressions of dissent from his opinions, it seems but just to bear witness to the high merits of his two admirable and learned works, as presenting some of the best results of modern German criticism in a form quite intelligible to the English reader.

To those who understand what Church History is, no apology is needed for a new work on the subject. The narrative of the three years of the Ministry of our Lord required four men, four minds, and four different points of view to do justice to it, though written under the guidance of an infallible Inspiration. Much more is there room for many men, many minds, and many different points of view, in a subject which covers all time, and in dealing with which no sort of infallibility can be decently laid claim to. No one book can pretend to be a History in the full sense of the word. The best effort, like the worst, is merely a History *according to* this man or that, according to one bias or another;—as a general rule, the worst bias being that which makes the loudest professions of being free from bias. The following work claims nothing on that score. It is written, however, according to the best judgment and best intentions of the author, with a sincere effort to state facts as they have come down to us from antiquity; and as such is commended to the kind indulgence of the charitable reader.

General Theological Seminary,
New York, *April* 5, 1860.

EMPERORS AND CHURCH TEACHERS.	A. D.	AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE.
Tiberius. 33 S. Stephen.†	30	33 Church in Jerusalem.
35 James (J).		*Persecution—Dispersion.*
		Gospel preached in Samaria,
37 Caligula.		Cæsarea, Cyprus, Phenice.
The Twelve in		(Simon Magus.)
41 Claudius. Palestine.	40	44 Herod Agrippa dies.
		45 Church in Antioch.
45 S. James the		46 Claudius expels the Jews
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Barnabas,	50	50 Council in Jerusalem.
54 Nero. Paul,		Church centres established in
Silas and others.		Alexandria, Corinth, Ephesus,
Linus. 62 S. James the Just.†		Rome—(Judaizing teachers
Cletus. 63 Symeon (J).	60	and Gnostics in Asia Minor,
Clemens. S. Peter,† Anianus(A).		Parties in Corinth, etc.)
and S. Paul.†		64 First Persecution.
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68 Galba. Ignatius, } (An).		
69 Otho.		
69 Vitellius.	70	Destruction of Jerusalem.
69 Vespasian.		
71 S. Thomas.†		Seven Churches of Asia, each
73 S. Bartholomew.†		with its Angel or Bishop.
79 Titus.	80	
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85 Avilius (A).		Menander.)
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98 Nerva. 98 Cerdo (A).		Nerva forbids accusations of
S. John, }		slaves against their masters.
99 Trajan. S. Clement. } †	100	Edict against secret societies.
Justus (J).		
S. Polycarp fl.	110	Third Persecution.
117 S. Ignatius.†		Correspondence between Pliny
117 Hadrian.		and Trajan.
119 *Alexander.* Ammias.		Insurrections of the Jews in
Quadratus.	120	Egypt and Cyrene.
Aristides.		
Papias.		Fourth Persecution.
130 *Sixtus I.*		Bar Cochba's Insurrection.
135 Marcus (J).	130	135 Ælia Capitolina.

N.B.—The Bishops of Rome *Italics;* of Jerusalem (J); of Alexandria (A); of Antioch (An); Martyrs are distinguished by an †.

EMPERORS AND CHURCH TEACHERS.	A. D.	AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE.
138 Antoninus Pius. Justin M. fl.	140	(Gnostic Sects and Schools.) (Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion.)
140 *Telesphorus* Hegesippus fl.	150	(Montanus.)
152 *Hyginus.* *Pius?*		(Paschal Controversy.)
154 *Anicetus.*		Polycarp confers with Anicetus.
Athenagoras.	160	
161 Marcus Aurelius. Melito of Sardis. Apollinaris.		Fifth Persecution. Synods respecting Easter and Montanism.
173 *Soter.* S. Polycarp.† S. Pothinus.†	170	The thundering Legion. (Tatian, Bardesanes.)
177 *Eleutherus.* Dionysius of Corinth fl.		Perseeutions at Lyons and Vienne. Preachers sent to
180 Commodus. Irenæus fl. Theophilus(An).	180	Britain. Commodus favors the Christians.
189 Demetrius (A). Pantænus fl.		Pantænus goes to India.
192 *Victor.* Apollonius.†	190	
192 Helvius Pertinax. Clemens fl.		(Victor excommunicates the Asiatic Churches.)
193 Didius Julianus. 195 Narcissus(J)		Several Synods holden.
194 Septimius Severus. Tertullian fl.	200	197 Jews and Samaritans rebel and are subdued.
202 S. Irenæus† 197 *Zephyrinus.* Origen fl. Minucius Felix fl.		202 Sixth Persecution. *Libelli pacis.*
211 Caracalla.	210	
212 Alexander (J). 217 *Callistus.* Hippolytus fl.		(Patripassian and Monarchian Heretics.)
217 Macrinus.		Ulpian the lawyer collects all the
219 Heliogabalus.	220	edicts against Christians
222 *Urbanus.* Julius Africanus fl.		and incites to persecution in Rome.
222 Alexander Severus.		(Sabellius fl.)
230 *Pontianus.*	230	(New Platonic School, Plotinus.)
235 *Anterus.*		
236 *Fabianus.*		
235 Maximinus Thrax. Babylas (An).		235 Seventh Persecution. Synod of Iconium.
237 Gordianus—Firmilianus. fl.	240	
238 Pupienus—Balbinus.		(Origen converts Beryllus.)

EMPERORS AND CHURCH TEACHERS.	A. D.	AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE.
244 Philippus Arabs.	245	Church in Numidia and Mauritania.
249 Decius. *Fabianus.*†	250	249 EIGHTH PERSECUTION.
Trajanus. Cyprian fl.		Development of Discipline. War,
251 *Cornelius.*† Greg. Thaumat.		Pestilence, Famine.
252 *Lucius.*† Dionysius (A).		
252 Gallus and Volusianus.		Goths overrun Asia Minor and
253 *Stephen.*† (Novatianus.)		Greece—Christian captives
254 Valerianus. 257 Cyprian.†		preach the Gospel.
257 *Sixtus II.*†		(Baptismal Controversy.)
259 Gallienus. (Nepos.)		257 NINTH PERSECUTION.
259 *Dionysius.*	260	Valerian taken prisoner by the Persians.
268 Claudius II.		(Sabellian Controversy in Pentapolis.)
269 *Felix.* Paul, } (An).	270	(Three COUNCILS OF ANTIOCH—
270 Aurelian. Domnus, }		Paul condemned.)
275 Tacitus. S. Antony.		Edict of Persecution—Aurelian
275 *Eutychianus.*		slain.
276 Florianus Methodius of	280	Porphyry writes against the
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294 (Constantius		
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308 Maximin.		309 Martyrs of Palestine.
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310 *Eusebius.* (Donatus.)	310	311 Death of Galerius and Edict
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		312 Victory of Constantine.
314 *Sylvester.*		(Donatist troubles.)
Alexander (A).		313 Victory of Licinius.
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BOOK I.

THE APOSTOLIC AGE,

FROM

JOHN THE BAPTIST TO THE SECOND DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

A. D. 30–135.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORGANIZATION.

THE history of the Church, being an account of the earthly growth or manifestation of God's kingdom, is most properly introduced by the mission of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah. He came preaching THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN NEAR AT HAND. As his star declined, the theme was taken up by One mightier than he; who, proclaiming the same tidings, sent forth His disciples two by two before His face, to preach to the Jews, saying, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. This prophesying continued to the close of the earthly ministry of our Lord, a period of about three years.[1]

John the Forerunner.

[1] According to Dr. Jarvis, the Annunciation took place in March, and the Birth of our Lord on December 25, of the year 4707, J. P.; He began His ministry 30 years after, January 6, of 4738; He was crucified on March 26, rose March 28, and ascended May 6, of 4741, J. P.; there being 33 years and about 3 months between the Birth and Crucifixion. See *Chronological Introduction* to the Hist. of the Church by the Rev. S. F. Jarvis D. D., LL. D. For *dates* in this vol. see Riddle, *Ecc. Chron.*

And as the Kingdom of God was the burden of all preaching at that time, so it was the object of universal and earnest expectation. The Law and the Prophets continued until John; but when the fulness of the times revealed a higher Dispensation,[2] all men, consciously or unconsciously, were pressing towards it. Among the Jews devout men were waiting for the Kingdom.[3] Among the Gentiles, Poets sang of Saturnian rule: Philosophers dreamed of ideal commonwealths. Wise men from the East came with regal gifts to the cradle of the Lord. Rude soldiers from the West flocked with scribes and pharisees, publicans and sinners, to the baptism of repentance proclaimed by John the Baptist.

Expectation of the Kingdom.

Our Lord Himself preached the Kingdom chiefly under the form of similitudes, or Parables. In a series of simple pictures, drawn from familiar scenes and ordinary callings, yet so nicely delineated that every stroke and shade has a meaning of its own, He left an inexhaustible treasure of the "notes," or prominent features of the Church. The promised reign was to be earthly in its position, heavenly in its character;[4] it was to be established everywhere;[5] it was to embrace the common social mixture of good and evil;[6] it was to be subject to all the vicissitudes of natural growth and progress,[7] yet to vindicate its divine origin by a wondrous vitality,[8] and power of persistence and endurance;[9] in short, it was to be visible and invisible, present and future, natural and supernatural, a mystery, and to

Parables, Notes of the Church.

[2] S. Luke, xvi. 16.
[3] S. Mark, xv. 43.
[4] S. John, xvii. 15, 16.
[5] S. Matt., xiii. 33.
[6] S. Matt., xiii. 26.
[7] S. Mark, iv. 27, 28.
[8] S. Mark, iv. 31, 32.
[9] S. Matt., xvi. 18.

some a stumbling-block,[10] till its complete and triumphant manifestation at the end of time. Our Lord taught more clearly, that the Head of this dispensation was to be absent in body, though present in spirit; and in His absence its affairs were to be administered by servants, having all a charge in common, yet each with his own share of trust and responsibility.[11]

Works of Jesus.

The works of Jesus, also, were evidently intended to be significant of the reign He came to establish among men. They were "signs" of the kingdom: parables in action. To the inquiry of the Baptist, whether the promised One had come, it was deemed an amply sufficient answer that "the lame walked, the blind saw, the deaf heard, lepers were cleansed, the dead were raised," and, as the crowning boon of all, that the poor had the Gospel preached to them.[12] It is not necessary to show here, how many of these miracles are capable of a typical, allegorical, or even prophetic application, foreshadowing certain features of the history of the Church.[13] It is enough

[10] S. Matt., xi. 6; S. John, xvii. 14.

[11] The parable of the *pound* indicates the common trust, that of the *talents* the different *degrees* of responsibility. S. Luke, xix. 12–25; S. Matt., xxv. 15.

[12] S. Matt., xi. 3.

[13] Thus, *the two fishing scenes* (S. Luke, v. 6, and S. John, xxi. 11), the one before and the other after the Resurrection, the one with a *net broken* from the number of fishes, the other with the *net unbroken*, became symbols of the Church militant and the Church triumphant: so with *the two voyages* of our Lord's Disciples, which gave rise to that beautiful and expressive symbol of the heavenward-bound ship: so with many other images familiar to readers of the early Church fathers. Strauss, in his famous *Leben Jesu*, sees only this typical character of the miracles, and therefore treats them as myths. The early fathers saw the same doctrinal and prophetic significance of the miracles, but were only the more convinced thereby that they were *facts*, namely *divine* facts. For the more meaning a fact has in it, the more divine it is. See Olshausen's *Com.* p. 356 (Am. ed.)

to notice, in general, that they are miracles of mercy rather than of power; and in reference to the office of the state, or of society, are of a *complementary*, not antagonistic character. They show that Christ came not to destroy, but to complete, to fill up. His kingdom "full of grace and truth" was to leaven all other kingdoms; to infuse its own spirit into all other organizations: but, in the mean time, to address itself to objects not contemplated in the scheme of political societies, nor indeed capable of being profitably undertaken by them. Duty to Cæsar, therefore, can never interfere with duty to God. Between the two there is no rivalry, no antagonism. The kingdom, though in the world, is not of the world.

His Mode of Teaching.

Such, in substance, was the teaching of our Lord, both in His words and works. The same complementary character distinguished His ethical precepts, and discourses to the people. Not novelty, but harmony, completeness, and, above all, authority, made His words such as never man spake. As the great seed-sower of the kingdom, He announced *principles* rather than dogmas: principles, which are ever budding with new life, whose vitality is as vigorous and fresh now, as when it first awakened the dull minds of the Disciples. It may be observed further, that in His way of announcing these principles He was the model of all teachers. The ancient philosophers, with perhaps one exception,[14] had in the promulgation of high truths addressed themselves exclusively to an elevated class. They had

[14] Namely, *Socrates;* who was much ridiculed by the polished Athenians for clothing divine philosophy in the language of mechanics and shop-keepers.

affected a knowledge which could be communicated only to the initiated few. It was a peculiarity of our Lord's instructions, that while they contained the profoundest truths, they were couched in language so perfect in form, so beautiful, so simple, so catholic, that though an angel may fail to penetrate their depth, yet a child may receive them with delight, and draw instruction from them. There was, therefore, no need of the "reserve," or *disciplina arcani*, affected by the philosophers. What was whispered in the ear was expressed in terms which could equally well be proclaimed from the house-top.

Ministry organized.

But as our Lord preached the kingdom He proceeded *pari passu* to prepare and organize its ministry; laying the foundation in Himself, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and in that chosen company of disciples, His "friends" and fellow-workers, who by faith and a special calling first became partakers of His life-giving nature. Himself the Rock and the living Stone, He made living stones of those whom He had enabled to confess Him.[15] This He did, however, only by degrees, and in proportion as the character of His mission was gradually unfolded.

Prophetic.

Baptized in the Jordan unto the baptism of John, and sealed by the Witness and the Spirit from the Father, He began the *prophetic ministry* already spoken of in this chapter, and made both the Twelve and the Seventy partakers of the same. As He preached the coming kingdom and wrought "signs," He sent them before His face with a like message, and like powers. By a wonderful course of minute

[15] S. Matt., xvi. 18; 1 Pet., ii. 4, 5; Ephes., ii. 20; Rev., xxi. 14.

teaching, of which the substance only is recorded in the Gospels,[16] He trained them the meanwhile for positions of higher trust afterwards to be given. So in the second stage of His ministerial work: when, on the night in which He was betrayed, He entered upon the exercise of His *priestly office*, offering Himself a willing offering for the sin of the whole world, He instituted a solemn memorial of His death and sacrifice, and commissioned the Apostles[17] to continue the same mystic rite in remembrance of Him. So, finally: when He began to enter upon His *reign*, having risen from the dead, *a king*, victorious over hell, and endued with all power in heaven and in earth, He gave them the full commission so often before promised;[18] sending them forth as the Father had sent Him, to make disciples of all nations, to evangelize and baptize, to minister in things sacred, to bind and loose, to teach, to rule, and in short to be His Apostles or Ambassadors to the end of time.

Priestly.

Kingly.

To this He added final and particular instructions; frequently appearing to the disciples during the

[16] S. John, xxi. 25.

[17] In the Christian Church, as in the Jewish—(1 Pet., ii. 5, and Exod., xix. 6)—the *kingly* and *priestly* character belongs to all believers, all being partakers of Christ the Head. But, as it belongs to Christ in one sense, and to His people in another, so it belongs to the ministry in a third sense. It belongs to Christ *absolutely*, as Head; to the ministry *ministerially*, as representing Christ to His people; and to His people *derivatively*, as His body, representing Him to the world at large. In the following work, however, I use the terms "kingly, priestly, and prophetic," in their larger sense, chiefly: as indicating respectively the ministry of *government*—of *rites, sacraments*, etc.—and of that *out-going activity in works of mercy*, with preaching, teaching, etc., which is preparatory to the more exact training in the Church.

[18] S. Matt., xvi. 17–19; xix. 28: S. Mark, i. 17. In such passages there is a *promise;* in S. Matt., xxviii. 18, etc., etc., there is the actual *gift* of authority.

space of forty days, performing miracles profoundly significant[19] of the spiritual character of His reign, and speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom. The Great Forty Days.

Having thus provided for the earthly future of His kingdom, like a prince, who, about to journey into a far country, commits the management of his estate to chosen ministers or stewards,[20] He gave His parting benediction to the Disciples; went away from them; ascended triumphantly into heaven, and sat down in His proper place at the right hand of God. The Ascension.

From the day of the Ascension, the Disciples waited in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father:" that "power" of the Holy Ghost, which should enable them to do the work committed to them, first in Jerusalem and Judæa, then in Samaria, and finally among all nations to the utmost borders of the earth. The Disciples waiting.

They were now an *Ecclesia*,[21] a spiritual commonwealth or society, duly called, trained, instructed, and commissioned for God's work; but it remained for the Spirit to give life and energy to their ministry. They were a house rightly ordered, with the candles set upon candlesticks, and each thing in its place; but it needed a divine light to light the candles, that the order of the house might be made apparent. They were, in short, an organized body, fitly joined and compacted; but, as in The Forming and Quickening.

[19] S. Luke, xxiv. 31; S. John, xx. 19; xxi. 1–11.

[20] S. Matt., xxv. 14.

[21] Ecclesia—*concilium, concilibulum, synodus, collegium*, by which names it was often called in early times. The term "kingdom," applies to it only as complete in Christ the Head. We pray, therefore, "Thy kingdom come." We wait for "His appearing and His kingdom."

the original creation God first formed man of the dust of the earth, and then breathed into his nostrils that breath of life by which man became a living soul, so, in the mystical Body of Christ, the framing and the quickening were kept distinct from one another. The Word had fashioned and created, the Spirit was to quicken. The King had organized, the Paraclete was to inspire, and energize, and guide: to give practical efficiency to the whole order and administration.

The King and Paraclete.

In the mean time, however, the Disciples did not await in idleness the advent of the promised Paraclete. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication; and as a breach had been made in their body by the apostasy of Judas, they elected one of their number to fill the vacant place. Matthias was duly chosen by the action of the Disciples, and by the will of God. He took the Bishopric of Judas, and was numbered among the twelve Apostles.

Matthias chosen.

CHAPTER II.

THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT.

When the promised Day arrived, it found the Disciples, thus, in the fulness of their number as originally called. There were about one hundred and twenty names enrolled, among whom were the Twelve, and probably the Seventy, all belonging to that devout class of Jews who are described as

Number of the Disciples.

waiting for the Kingdom. Besides these there were possibly as many as five hundred,[1] male and female, who were included under the general name of Brethren. Not this larger number, however, but probably only the smaller one first mentioned, were assembled "in one place" on the Day of Pentecost.

At the same time, in compliance with the Law, and by virtue of a long course of providential Preparation,[2] there was a much larger concourse of devout and faithful Jews, who had come up from every quarter to the annual Feast of the First Fruits. For the Israelites, at this time, were at home everywhere. In the expressive language of the Prophet, they were "sown" among the nations; they were "the dew upon the grass" of heathen society, preparing the field for the sickle of the Gospel reapers. They were bearing an ecumenical witness to the unity of the Godhead. It was as representatives, then, of a vast system of preparation, that these devout Jews, the flower of the Dispersion, had once more assembled to wait upon the Lord, and to give utterance to that unceasing prayer of the Jewish heart, "Lord wilt Thou, at this time, restore again the Kingdom to Israel!"

The Assemblage of devout Jews.

Preparation.

The congregation of the Disciples was thus in the

[1] 1 Cor., xv. 6.

[2] The Preparation for Christianity is the history of Civilization in the ancient world. As the Law was a *Pædagogus* leading men to Christ, so, also, says S. Clement of Alexandria, was the philosophy or culture of the Greeks. The same good Providence was manifest in both. On this subject see Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle*, Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed*, and Neander's *Introduction*. This last, however, is a history of the preparation for the *Gospel* merely; whereas, the progress of civilization among the ancients, both Jews and Greeks, prepared the way equally for the Gospel and the Church. Mosheim's first chapter dwells too much on the negative preparation; *i. e.*, upon the failure of every thing that preceded Christianity.

midst of the Assembly of devout Hebrews, the Dispersion, the Nations, as the "little leaven hid in three measures of meal." It required but a breath from on high to enable that leaven to leaven the whole lump.

Descent of the Spirit.

How that Breath came, in a way as beautifully significant as it was miraculous, filling the whole house wherein the Disciples were assembled, and what was the immediate result, is familiar to every reader of the Acts of the Apostles.

It is sufficient to note here, that though three thousand souls were forthwith converted to the Gospel, and though every day afterwards added to the number, the Apostles were at no loss in establishing order among the multitudes who thus eagerly pressed in. The divine instructions in "the things pertaining to the Kingdom," recently received, had doubtless prepared them for so great an emergency. Accordingly, those who believed were baptized. Upon those baptized, the Apostles laid their hands, imparting to them "gifts," which, in the lack of a sufficient number of duly trained Ministers, seem to have fitted the whole body for some share in the great work, and to have made the ministry, for a while, almost co-extensive with the Church itself.[3] At all events, the converts freely offered themselves, and all they had, to the disposal of the Apostles.

Gifts given.

Judaic Foundation.

In this way the foundation of the Church was laid in that race, or rather in that blessed and covenanted "remnant," to which it had been

[3] The "gifts" were given "*for* the perfecting (i. e., fitting) of the saints (i. e., believers), *for* (or literally *into* or *unto*) work of ministry," &c. Ephes., iv. 7–12. The word "ministry" I understand in its larger sense, as including all kinds of service to the Church.

originally promised. The chosen people continued the chosen people still. Jews were the first proclaimers of the Gospel; Jews its first converts; the first demonstration of its order, as of its power, was in a community exclusively Judaic.

In all Parts of the World.

And the application of this principle was not confined to Jerusalem, or Palestine only. These Pentecostal converts, sojourners as many of them were in far distant lands, could hardly have failed, after a while, to return to the places of their dispersion, and to spread the glad tidings of what they had seen and heard.[4] As S. Paul testified not many years after,[5] the sound of the Gospel went out into all lands, its words to the ends of the world. Through Judaism, as through a vast nervous tissue, the notes of the Pentecostal trumpet were indefinitely prolonged. Everywhere Israelites believed, or had opportunity to believe. Of the wide-spreading tree of Judaism, therefore, it might truly be said, that the stock which contained the faith, not merely the blood, of Abraham, was renovated and saved by reception of the Gospel: the unbelieving branches were alone cut off.[6]

[4] Among the first preachers mentioned in the Acts, were "Nicolas, a proselyte of *Antioch*," "Ananias," a "disciple" in *Damascus*, "men of *Cyprus* and *Cyrene*," and Lucius, of *Cyrene*; to whom may be added Saul of *Tarsus*, and Apollos of *Alexandria*. Acts, vi. 5; ix. 10; xi. 20; xiii. 1, etc.

[5] Rom., x. 18.

[6] The subject of the Judaic foundation is ably brought out in Thiersch's *History of the Christian Church*, translated by Thomas Carlyle, Esq.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWELVE IN JERUSALEM.

Twelve Years.

THE Apostles remained in Jerusalem, for a period, it is supposed, of about twelve years; making frequent excursions, however, into the towns of Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, and even, it may have been, into more distant regions.

Importance of Jerusalem.

So long a residence in one place was warranted by the importance of Jerusalem, as the sacred city of the Hebrews, as a point of universal concourse, and as the living heart of orthodox religion.[1] From such a centre it was easy to keep an eye upon all other quarters. It was the place, especially, to which those devout men resorted annually, who were in fit preparation for the Kingdom, and who could be most readily converted, not into believers merely, but into Evangelists and Teachers for all parts of the world. It was the most proper position, in short, for the first manifestation of the Gospel, both in its power and in its order. As the proselytes, gathered everywhere from among the Jews of the Dispersion, would naturally look to Zion as the fountain-head of the true Law,[2] nothing could be more essential than that the system established there should be in every way perfect and complete. The Apostles, therefore, were not unmindful of the

Out of Zion the Law.

[1] See Professor Blunt's *Lectures on the Church History of the First Three Centuries.*

[2] Mic., iv. 2.

command to "go forth" and "disciple" all the nations. They made Jerusalem their starting-point. They concentrated there for a while that outgoing energy, by which the world was to be converted. For the further stages of their mission, they waited till the door should be fairly opened, or till the Lord Himself should give them the expected sign.

The Church in Jerusalem, therefore, was the object of interest for a while to the whole company of the Apostles. Under their care, the little band of Pentecost grew into a large and thoroughly disciplined host. Trained already to the form of godliness by the admirable discipline of the Synagogue and Temple, the Hebrew converts were moulded with little effort into an orderly, regular, self-sacrificing life. The doctrine of the Apostles was their rule of faith; the communion of the Apostles their bond of fellowship. To avoid needless separation from their countrymen, they resorted for "prayers" to the Temple. To abstain from needless offence, they celebrated the "breaking of bread," and the "love-feast," in houses more retired. Giving themselves and their all to the common cause, with a profound conviction that the work before them was one which demanded their utmost efforts, they spontaneously fell into a sort of camp-life: a continuation, as it were, of that annual exhibition of mutual support, and fraternal equality, which the Jews were accustomed to afford at their solemn feasts. For it was not the least of the advantages of those great gatherings, that they promoted, for the time being at least, a hospitality which made "all things common." They were seasons at which the rich differed from the poor

The Pentecostal Society, A. D. 33.

Not Communist.

chiefly in the power of giving and entertaining. The earliest Jewish Christian Church was a prolongation, as it were, of one of these happy times. It was a Pentecostal week extending itself into a Pentecostal life. It required, of course, no little sacrifice of domestic comfort. But the sacrifice was a spontaneous and free-will offering. It was accompanied, therefore, with a gladness and singleness of heart, which distinguished it from mere communistic or monastic schemes, and commended it to the favor of all classes of the people.

So heavenly a state of things could not continue long undisturbed in any community of men. Ananias and Sapphira, attempting to serve two masters, introduced into the infant society the old Jewish leaven of secret mammon-worship. It was the sin of Achan: avarice availing itself of things devoted to the Lord. It was an offence that lay at the door of the Church's progress; and was punished by the same righteous vengeance, which on two occasions before had armed our Lord with the knotted scourge, and which we find breaking out twice afterwards, on the thresholds respectively of Samaritan and Gentile Christianity.

Sin of Ananias and Sapphira.

Differences, also, which had been forgotten in the first glow of charity, began to be felt again, and the peace of the Church was marred by frivolous dissensions.

Dissensions.

The Hellenist converts murmured against the Hebrews, because, as they complained, their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations of the bounties of the Church. In such cases Charity is obliged to call in system to her aid. To do justice to any ministration there must be special ministers

appointed for the purpose. The Apostles, therefore, called an Assembly of the body of the Disciples; stated the incompatibility of cares of this kind with their own more spiritual duties; and caused seven men to be chosen, probably from among the Hellenist party, whom they set apart by the laying on of hands to attend to such matters in future. The seven, thus chosen and ordained, are the first, perhaps,[3] who received the distinctive title of Deacons.

The seven Deacons, A. D. 34.

A similar necessity for orderly distribution of ministerial cares led the Apostles, about this time, according to Eusebius, or it may have been a little later, to place James, surnamed the Just, one of the Lord's brethren, in special oversight of the Church in Jerusalem. Though the Apostles remained in the city, or thereabouts, yet their attention soon began to be diverted to other quarters. Nothing was more natural, then, than that a responsibility, which devolving upon all alike might be in danger of being neglected, should be laid especially upon one as his proper and peculiar charge.

James made Bishop.

It is still a question, whether this James is the same as the son of Alphæus, one of the original Twelve, or is to be numbered rather with Apostles of a somewhat later calling. If one of the Twelve, his oversight of the Church in Jerusalem is the first instance of one of their number confined to a local jurisdiction. Whether one of them or not, he was at all events a colleague of the Apostles, on terms of perfect equality with them; and was treated on all occasions of apostolic conference, as one of the

James an Apostle.

[3] This, and other matters connected with the Pentecostal Church, are amply discussed in Mosheim's *Commentaries*, and Bishop Hinds's *History of the First Century*.

"pillars," or as the word in its connections seems to imply, one of the original pillars, of the Church.[4]

This settlement of the government in Jerusalem, under one responsible head, may have been hastened by a series of events, which followed close upon the appointment of the Seven. The increased zeal in preaching, and the growing popularity of the Gospel, awakened the spirit of persecution among the Sadducee rulers. Peter and John were seized twice, and narrowly escaped with their lives. A more furious storm was excited against Stephen, one of the seven deacons. By the election of these officers, the Apostles had been enabled to give themselves more fully to the ministry of the Word. Others, who had the gift of utterance, followed their example. Multitudes were converted, and among them a great company of priests.[5] It seemed a second Pentecost. Old things were rapidly passing away, all things were in process of renewal. Conscious of the progress of this mighty change, and endowed to an extraordinary degree with prophetic and evangelic gifts, Stephen had borne a clear witness to the fulfilment of the Mosaic Law in Christ, and had drawn upon himself the special

Persecution, A. D. 34.

Second Pentecost.

[4] Acts, xv. 13–22; Gal., ii. 9. In this last passage *James*, Cephas, and John give to Paul and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship," and are spoken of as Apostles *before* these latter: i. e., of an earlier calling. This seems to make James one of the original Twelve. The passages alleged against this view are easily interpreted in accordance with it. My own opinion is in favor of the identity of James of Jerusalem with James the son of Alphæus.

[5] The first allusion to *Presbyters* or *Elders* in the Jerusalem Church, is in Acts, xi. 30. As there is every probability that those who had been bred in the Judaic ministry became, on their conversion, ministers in the Church, we may suppose that Presbyters existed from the time of this conversion of "the great company of Priests," if not earlier.

indignation of the more zealous pilgrims and sojourners. Being brought before the council, he bore the same testimony still. He was cast out of the city and stoned to death; but the mantle of his martyr spirit descended invisibly upon a young Benjamite standing by, with more than a double portion of his power and boldness. Death of Stephen.

The death of Stephen was followed by a general persecution. Saul, who knew not as yet his own higher calling, was particularly active in scattering the flock. The dispersion that ensued, however, only disseminated the more widely the seeds of divine truth, and opened a way for the Gospel among distant nations. Dispersion of the Disciples.

Philip, an Evangelist by gift, and one of the seven Deacons by ordination, repaired to Samaria, preached, performed miracles, and baptized a great number of the people. Peter and John, hearing of this success, came down from Jerusalem, and set their Apostolic seal to the work of Philip. They laid their hands on the converts, and gave them miraculous gifts. Simon Magus, one of the number, coveted this Apostolic power, and offered money for it. Rejected by S. Peter, he became subsequently an apostate, and is known in history as the leader of the Gnostic heresy. He is still better known for that practical heresy, called *simony*, which has ever since remained "a gall of bitterness, and a bond of iniquity," in so many portions of the Church. From Samaria, Philip repaired to the desert region towards Gaza, where he baptized the Eunuch of Queen Candace, and so sent a seed of light to the distant land of Ethiopia. Philip, the Deacon. Simon Magus. The Eunuch of Ethiopia.

Other disciples, scattered abroad at the same time,

were equally successful. Some went to Damascus; where they were hardly more than settled, when they learned to their dismay that their most eager persecutor, "the Benjamite wolf," was on his way to the city, with authority from the high-priest to carry them bound to Jerusalem. They soon learned to their astonishment, however, that the wolf had been converted into a chosen shepherd of the flock. Another party repaired to Cyprus, the home of the Levite Barnabas, soon to be reckoned among Apostles. Others fled to Phœnice; and at length, after the lapse of several years, the door to the Gentiles having been in the mean time opened by that Apostle to whom the keys of the kingdom had been promised, another party preached with great success to the Hellenic population of Antioch, the head of the province of Syria, and in fact the great metropolis of the East.

Other Disciples.

Persecution ceases A. D. 36–41.

But the storm, which was thus widely scattering the seeds of truth, had long since spent its fury in Jerusalem itself. Towards the end of the reign of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate was deposed from the government of Judæa; Caiaphas was ejected from the high-priesthood; and in the succeeding reigns of the Emperors Caligula and Claudius, Judæa and Samaria were annexed to the presidency of Syria, and all Palestine came under the rule of Herod Agrippa. These events proved favorable, for a while, to the tranquillity of the Christians. The Jews, absorbed in troubles of their own, had little time for persecution. A great calm ensued.[6] S. Peter availed himself of the opportunity to exercise both

S. Peter visits the Churches.

[6] Jarvis, *Church of the Redeemed*, period v., ch. vii.

his episcopal and his evangelic calling; visiting the churches in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, and confirming the disciples in the unity of the Faith. It was in the course of these visitations, that Cornelius, the devout Roman soldier, was admitted with his household to Baptism; and so a foundation was laid for a Gentile Christian Church in the important city of Cæsarea.[7]

The other Apostles.

Of other Apostles, at this period, there is no express record. It is to be presumed, however, that most of them were engaged in the same way as S. Peter. Within the circle of Judæa, and Samaria, and Galilee, there was room enough for them all; and while they still met at Jerusalem, as the common centre, they probably saw less of that city every year. Before they departed for more distant fields, one of the four Gospels, that of S. Matthew, had been written. Having had experience of the wants of growing Churches, they can hardly be supposed to have parted company without some mutual understanding as to creeds, forms of worship, rules of discipline, and the like; though in all such matters the mere fact that they had been trained in the same school, and for so long a period associated in the same field of labor, would be enough, independently of the gift of inspiration, to secure a reasonable degree of uniformity in their preaching, and in their practice.

Inspired History limited.

And it is for this reason, probably, that in the inspired narrative of the Acts of the Apostles we have only one line of Apostolic labor followed out with any approach to minuteness. Sacred History

[7] It is to be noted here, that Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, were the heads respectively of the Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile populations of Palestine.

is averse to idle repetitions. Knowing what one Apostle did under any given circumstances, we have a right to take for granted, that all under like circumstances followed much the same course.

Mission to the Gentiles. A. D. 40–45.

From the time of the conversion of the Greeks at Antioch there had been a lively and friendly intercourse between the Christians of that city, and those of the mother Church. Barnabas had been sent thither, apparently with Apostolic powers; and had taken with him Saul, whom he found in Tarsus. Quite a company of Prophets had followed. In return, the Antiochean Christians, having heard of the distress of their brethren in Judæa by reason of a great dearth which prevailed about the year forty-three, made a collection for their relief, and sent it to them by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. About the same time, Herod Agrippa, the king of Palestine, took offence at certain of the Church leaders; put James the Elder, the brother of John, to death; and finding this course to be popular with the Jews, cast Peter into prison. There were thus two causes at work, to impel the Apostles forth to their wider field of labor. There was persecution at home, and an open door abroad. Such circumstances would naturally be regarded as an indication of God's will. Accordingly, Peter, when miraculously released from his imprisonment, went down to Cæsarea, the scene of the earliest success among the Gentiles, and there for a while abode. Not very long after, Barnabas and Saul were sent forth from Antioch on their first missionary journey. There is good reason to believe, that a similar course was at the same time pursued by most, if not all of the Apostles.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCHES OF THE GENTILES—S. PAUL.

The Gospel flows out. A. D. 42.

It has already been seen, that the persecution which arose about Stephen caused the Gospel to flow out in all directions, and the wave continuing to roll on long after the storm had ceased, extended at length as far as the great metropolis of Syria, and resulted in the establishment there of a flourishing congregation of Gentile Christians. In the same way, it has been noticed incidentally that, some years prior to this event, the door had been opened to the Gentiles, in a more formal way, by the ministry of S. Peter, in the case of the Roman Centurion Cornelius.

Gentiles admitted to Grace.

With this first example of Gentile faith, the question of immediate admission to the Church by Baptism, or of a previous probation by obedience to the Law, naturally came up for determination. To S. Peter's mind it was made clear by a special revelation. It was symbolically shown him that God had cleansed what had hitherto been judged unclean. Humanity in its varied types was to be regarded henceforward as a new creation; a clean and docile flock, let down, as it were, out of Heaven, and conducted by God's own hand to the door of the Ark.

Principle admitted.

This pregnant principle, confirmed by the outpouring of miraculous gifts upon Cornelius and his house, was acknowledged by the Church of Jerusa-

lem, and began to be generally apprehended as a settled rule.

Cæsarea a mother Church.

From this time forward also, Cæsarea, the home of the congregation formed by the household of Cornelius, became a centre and Mother Church of Gentile Christianity.

Gospel in other places.

The preparation of heart and mind, so remarkably shown in this instance, was doubtless going on simultaneously in many other parts of the civilized world. In Rome itself there were Christians at a very early date; and it is said that Simon Peter went thither just after the baptism of Cornelius.[1] It is more probable, that the tradition is derived from a later visit of the Apostle, or from attributing to Peter the acts of some other of the many Simons who were then engaged in evangelic labors. In parts of Egypt also, the Gospel seems to have been proclaimed long before the arrival of S. Mark, the founder of the Church in that country. The sect of Therapeutæ,[2] described by Philo the Jew, has the appearance of having been a sort of Jewish Christian

[1] It is more certain, as Dr. Jarvis shows, that the Jews who had been banished from Rome under Tiberius, and who were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, were, about this time, allowed to return to the imperial city. They, doubtless, carried the Gospel with them. See *Church of the Redeemed*, Per. V., vii. 1.

[2] The fact, that these "citizens of Heaven upon earth," as they called themselves, had some peculiarities not wholly Christian, weighs nothing against the theory of Eusebius on the subject; for nothing could be more natural, than that imperfect imitations of the Pentecostal community in Jerusalem, should spring up among Jews in other regions. Apollos, the learned Alexandrian, preached the Gospel, not only before he was baptized, but before he was more than partially instructed. Acts, xviii. 24–28; Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 17; Philo Judæus, ii., 470, Ed. Mango, (vol. 4, p. 6, Bohn's Ed.) With this compare the account of Christian manners in the *Epistola ad Diognetum*, an extract from which is given in Schaff's *History of the Church*, p. 146.

Society. Glimpses, in short, of a preparatory Pentecostal preaching of the Gospel, followed in due time by the more decisive labors of Apostolic founders, are discernible in the traditions, or in the customs, of many of the early Churches.

More decided manifestation.

But the time had come at length for that full manifestation of the grace of God to the Gentiles, which, as destined to take root in the richest soil of our humanity, and to bear the most varied and abiding fruits, has been chosen by inspiration as the special historic theme of the first century.

Saul of Tarsus,[3] the flower of the Jewish schools, a Roman by civil rights, a Greek in versatility and force of mind, had been converted, baptized, and set apart to the Apostolic office, soon after the martyrdom of S. Stephen; but owing to the unripeness of the times for his peculiar work, had been obliged to school his fiery zeal for several years in comparatively obscure and unimportant fields of labor. From this retirement Barnabas was inspired to call him forth. Being himself a man of Prophetic and Apostolic gifts, and being sent by the Mother Church in Jerusalem to build up the Greek congregation in the great Metropolis of Syria, he discerned in Saul a suitable partner of his labors, and invited him accordingly into that noble field.

In Antioch believers called Christians, A. D. 45.

In Antioch the two labored together for three years or more. Multitudes of Greeks were converted. A new centre and mother city of Religion was established. And, as if to mark an epoch in Church History, the term Nazarenes, which the Jews

[3] Conybeare and Howson: *Life and Epistles of S. Paul.* Paley: *Horæ Paulinæ.*

had applied to the followers of Jesus, began to be replaced by the more honorable title of Christians.

The two Apostles sent forth, A. D. 45.

About the year forty-five, just after a season of extraordinary fasting and prayer, Antiochean prophets were inspired by the Holy Ghost to "separate Barnabas and Saul" for a mission still more fruitful and extensive.

Cyprus.

Being thus sent forth by the Spirit,[4] the Apostles repaired to Seleucia, thence to the Island of Cyprus; which having traversed from end to end, preaching in all the synagogues of the Jews, they at last stood in the presence of the Deputy, or Proconsul, Sergius Paulus.

Elymas.

Here occurred the third of those great "signs" of judgment, which marked the initiative, as it were, of the three main stages of the Church's progress. The Gospel had been met by two forms of hypocrisy in the persons of Ananias the Jew and Simon Magus the Samaritan. Now, in the person of Elymas, or Bar-Jesus, it is encountered by the Spirit of negation and downright contradiction. The crisis was one of vast importance. Over the strong and skeptical but superstitious intellect of the Roman world, Sorcery now wielded the sceptre which had long since fallen from the palsied hand of Religion. To gain a hearing for the Gospel, this baleful power must be confronted and disarmed. The contest was easily decided. Elymas, fit type of godless intellect, was blinded for a season; and, reduced to a childlike

[4] Saul's *ordination* was by the mouth of the Lord himself: Acts, xxii. 14, 15, 17–21; 2 Cor. xii. The laying on of hands, in Acts, xiii. 1–4, was, therefore, not an ordination, but either an extraordinary seal, through *Prophets* specially inspired for the occasion, to the ordination previously given; or, as is more likely, a mere setting apart to missionary labor.

condition, had to look around for some one to guide him. Sergius Paulus believed. And Saul, henceforward called Paul in memory, it is supposed, of this great victory, departed shortly after from Paphos, and proceeded with his company to Perga in Pamphylia.

Course of the Apostles.

Thence, the course of the Apostles may be briefly described, as, *first*, a journey forward to preach the Gospel, and baptize; and *then* a return on the same line, with a careful visitation of all the evangelized towns and cities, to confirm the disciples, to ordain Presbyters; in short, to organize local Churches—a work uniformly accompanied by prayer and fasting. To account for the rapidity with which the establishment of local ministries was accomplished, we must suppose not only great zeal and self-devotion on the part of the new converts, but a large outpouring of supernatural gifts. In many cases, fit men were pointed out by the spirit of prophecy. Timothy, a young convert, thus designated by prophecies going before,[5] was selected for a higher and larger ministry in the Church; and after S. Paul's next visit to that region, accompanied him constantly as a chosen disciple and companion.

Return to Antioch, A. D. 48.

Having returned to the Hellenist mother city, the Apostles cheered all hearts with the tidings that the door of faith had been effectually opened to the Gentile world. This door, however, was near being closed again by the perverse dogmatism of certain Judaizing Christians.

It was the same question that had already been settled in the case of Cornelius; coming up, how-

[5] 1 Tim. i. 18.

Question with the Judaizers.

ever, in a somewhat modified shape. Judaism had been removed, as it were, from the vestibule of the Gospel: it was now endeavoring to find itself a place in the very sanctuary. If not circumcised *before* admission to God's grace, should not the Gentiles at least be circumcised after? Should not obedience to the Law be one of the fruits of the grace vouchsafed by the Gospel? The question was not one of ceremonial merely. It involved the completeness of the Church in Christ the Head. It involved by implication the divinity and absolute sovereignty of Christ the Head. To put the Law on a level with Grace, would be, in effect, to put Moses the servant on a level with Christ the Son.[6] The strong bias that existed in the Jewish mind towards this form of heresy, made it the more necessary that the real position of the Church should be clearly and conclusively defined.

Settled in council at Jerusalem, A. D. 50 or 52.

The question was finally settled in a council of the Apostles, with the Elders and Brethren of the Mother Church in Jerusalem. One point of natural law, almost forgotten by the heathen, and three ancient precepts[7] of the Noachic covenant, were re-enacted. Beyond this, no legal burden was allowed to be imposed upon Gentile Christians. It doubtless added weight to this decree, that it had been drawn up by James, whose name had been unwarrantably used by the Judaizers, and who held a high place in the Church as the Bishop, or Apostle, of the Circumcision.

[6] Heb. iii. 5, 6; Col. ii. 10.

[7] Acts, xv. 29. Whether these three precepts were intended to be permanently binding may be doubted: that they were not rigidly enforced, is certain, from Rom. xiv. 14; 1 Cor. x. 25, etc. On this point see Hinds's *Hist. of Chr. Ch.*, part ii., ch. iv.

By this important act, the Church was absolved from the bands of the Law, and Christianity was declared complete in itself. Salvation was a gift intended for all men. It was to be given freely to all who had faith to receive it. The Law could add nothing to it: the absence of the Law could detract nothing from it. The Tree of Life had taken root below the crust of Judaism; and whatever leaves it might afterwards put forth in the shape of needful forms, or canons, would draw their nourishment, not from any national or sectional source, but as it were from the Catholic soil of redeemed and sanctified humanity.

The Church free.

This point settled, the Apostle of the Gentiles could proceed unembarrassed in his mighty labors. The course pursued in his first journey he continued, so far as we can learn, to the end of his life. To visit the Churches already founded; to write, or send messengers, to them; to add new fields of labor by missionary journeys into parts unappropriated as yet by other Apostles; to repair occasionally to Jerusalem, or Antioch, on errands of charity, friendship, or devotion; and, finally, to concentrate his efforts by residences of two or three years in the great world-centres, the *ganglions*, as it were, of the social system; these, with sufferings, toils, successes, unparalleled in the history of human labor, are the sum of that wonderful life, so simply and yet so graphically portrayed in the living narrative of the Acts.

S. Paul's general course.

In the Apostle's second journey, the design of which was to "visit the brethren in every city where he had preached the word of God," having separated from Barnabas on account of a dissension

S. Paul's second journey: Corinth, A.D. 50–53

Silas. with regard to Mark, he took Silas with him, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the
Timothy. Churches. At Lystra he added Timothy to his company. Thence passing through Phrygia and Galatia, he naturally looked towards Ephesus, the great and enlightened centre of Asia Proper. But, diverted from that field by a special admonition of the Holy Ghost, he crossed over to Macedonia; preached the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, and other chief cities; left Timothy and Silas to go on with the work; spent a short time in Athens; and
Corinth. finally took up his abode in Corinth, and made of it another great centre of Christian influence. There S. Paul remained, pouring out his whole heart to the most eager, susceptible, and inquisitive of all people, for more than eighteen months. From that conspicuous and cosmopolitan position, he kept an eye upon the Churches which he and his companions had established in Macedonia, Achaia, and the parts adjacent. Here, also, he began another fruitful branch of his labors, by writing two Epistles to the brethren in Thessalonica.

After a visit of devotion to Jerusalem and Antioch, he began his third journey by revisiting the Churches of Galatia and Phrygia in order, and confirming the
Ephesus, A.D. 54–58. Disciples. Then proceeding to Ephesus, another of those places where all tides met, he spread his nets there for three years or more, drawing within the circle of his influence all the chief towns of Asia Proper. This city was a great resort of the professors of diabolical arts. In combating these forms of "spiritual wickedness in high places," the Apostle seems to have drawn more largely upon supernatural resources, than in any other field of his labors.

Driven at length from Ephesus, he made an extensive visitation of the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia. But a mysterious impulse from the Spirit turned his face once more towards Jerusalem, with an expectation of finding a way opened thence to Spain, through Italy and Rome; to the Christians of which latter city he wrote the most elaborate of his Epistles.[8] On his way he touched at many places; among others at Miletus, where he met the Ephesian pastors, and gave them a solemn charge. At every place where he touched, he received new warnings of the bonds and afflictions that awaited him in Jerusalem.

Towards Jerusalem.

Having arrived at the Jewish capital, he was received with great kindness by James, and found the Church there in a highly flourishing condition. But a sedition was stirred up against him among the fanatical Jews. Rescued from their violence by the Roman officers, he spent two years a prisoner in Cæsarea; whence, having appealed to Cæsar, he was finally sent to Rome, "an ambassador in bonds." In this greatest of world-centres, which had been for a long time the goal of his earnest aspirations, he taught with much freedom for two years or more, seeing the little flock grow into "a great multitude," as the heathen historian[9] implies, and maintaining a constant communication, by letter[10] and by Apostolic messengers, with the Churches of the vast field in which he and his companions had labored. For it is to be observed, that S. Paul's "company" had

Cæsarea, A.D. 58–60.

Rome, A.D. 60–63.

[8] During this period were written the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, the *Galatians*, the *Romans*.

[9] Taciti *Annal.*, xv. 44.

[10] Epistles to the *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Philemon*, *Hebrews*, *Colossians*.

received continual accessions; and where he could not be present in person to superintend the Churches, he had reliable men at hand whom he could send in his place.

That the hope so confidently expressed in the Epistles to Philemon and the Hebrews,[11] was in due time fulfilled; that the Apostle, set at liberty, revisited once more the field of his mighty labors, making permanent provision for the supreme government of the Churches; and that, fired with his old missionary zeal, he set his face towards the remote West, visiting Spain[12] as he had long intended, and, as tradition says, Gaul and the British Isles; all this has been commonly believed in the Church, and harmonizes entirely with the few intimations that can be gathered from the pages of Holy Writ.

Spain, Gaul, Britain, A.D. 63–67.

But, in the mean time, the world, governed by a mad tyrant, was falling into one of its epidemics of periodical phrensy. The Jews, at no time remarkable for their patience under the Roman yoke, had been galled into rebellion; the heathen were in a state of terrible excitement; and the hostility to the Gospel, which had never more than partially relaxed, and which caused Christianity to be everywhere spoken against, had been fanned into a fierce and almost universal hatred. The Christians were accused of the most atrocious crimes. Their religion was regarded as a baleful superstition. The tyrant Nero, strongly

Nero. First general persecution. A.D. 64–67.

[11] Phil. 22; Heb. xiii. 19, 23. It was probably after his release, that he wrote the Epistle to Titus, and the *first* to Timothy. Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, iii. 10, argues ably for a second imprisonment. Dr. Schaff, *Apostolic Church*, makes an elaborate argument against it, but in his later work seems to admit it as at least explaining certain difficulties in the New Testament.

[12] Rom. xv. 24, 28.

suspected of having set fire to Rome for his private entertainment, determined to divert suspicion from himself, by turning its full force against the hated sect. The usual course, in such cases, was to extort confessions by the rack. "At first," says the heathen historian,[13] "some were seized who plead guilty; afterwards, on their testimony, a great multitude were convicted, not of incendiarism, but of enmity to mankind. To tortures mockery was added. The victims were sewed up in the skins of beasts, thrown to dogs, hung on crosses, or smeared with pitch and set on fire, to light the streets by night." Nero revelled in such scenes; and as he opened his gardens for the hideous entertainment, looking on with unrestrained delight, or drove about the city in the garb of a charioteer, his lineaments stamped themselves upon the Christian mind as the very image of Antichrist. The persecution became general, and raged till the death of Nero, about four years. The Christians of that period, however, were too much disturbed and scattered, and perhaps too confident in their expectations of the approaching end of all things, to chronicle their own sufferings. Beyond the brief and hostile accounts of Tacitus, no unquestioned record of the persecution remains. Its horrors are to be inferred from the deep tinge they left upon legendary tradition.

Cruelties.

S. Paul returned to Rome while the persecution was still raging, probably not long before the tyrant's death; and there, in company with S. Peter, bore his last witness to the Truth. Being a Roman citizen, he was put to death with the sword.

Martyrdom of S. Paul, A. D. 67.

[13] Tacit. Annal., xv. 44.

His second Epistle to Timothy, written in prison when he was ready and willing to be offered, and alluding to his position, though without a word of complaint against the monster from whose cruelty he suffered, has, in view of the evil times coming upon the Church, a tone of sadness in it; but, with regard to his own calling, is a wonderful testimony to posterity of the spirit in which the last trial was looked forward to and encountered. It is probable, from the same Epistle, that all his companions were not equally courageous. Christians, as a body, had little of that spirit which flies into the face of death. They were, in fact, a timid flock. In every persecution their first impulse was to flee. Equally removed from the high-wrought fanaticism which nerved the Jews of that period, and from the stoic indifference which made the heathen scoff at danger, their courage was merely that of a good conscience and good hope; and when taken at unawares was often found deficient. It had this merit, however, that though it could flee, it could not yield. Simon Peter, it is said, showed some signs of his original infirmity almost to the last moment. He was fleeing from Rome when the Lord met him and turned him back. But S. Paul was naturally of a different temperament. His splendid genius was sustained by a tense and uncompromising spirit, ever on the alert, never taken at fault, keen, fiery, and almost fierce in its rapidity of movement, which caused the name of the Benjamite wolf[14] to cleave

Christians timid.

[14] "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf," etc.: Gen. xlix. 27. It is probable, however, that the phrase was always understood in a good sense; for to the old religious mind *all* of God's creatures had something beautiful and good in them, and the *ser-*

to him in a complimentary sense, when in some respects it seemed singularly inappropriate to his character. These being the natural traits of the Apostle, the quiet, familiar, almost business-like tone of the last of his Epistles is the more remarkable.

CHAPTER V.

POSITION OF S. PAUL AND HIS COMPANY.

S. Paul the type of an enlarged Ministry.

S. Paul thus labored, seemingly a supernumerary, one "last and least," "born out of due time," and "separate from his brethren" of the original Apostolic college: yet, surpassing them all in the variety, extent, and success of his labors, he became in reality "the fruitful bough" of the Apostolate, the representative of the Ministry as enlarged to meet the wants of the Gentile Churches. He is the type of that second Apostolate that sprang up, when the rod of the ministry "budded" with new life: when God gave the word, and a great company of Preachers went forth to all the borders of the earth.

The Twelve foundation Stones.

When our Lord chose the Twelve from among those "disciples," who had been with Him in His ministry, His first reference would seem to have been to the twelve tribes, and to the Theocracy as the type of the perpetual Divine government of the

pent, lion, eagle, wolf, etc., were as often symbols of good as of evil. In this respect, the modern mind is less genial than the ancient, more apt to look at the eagle's claws, than at his heaven-piercing eye.

Church. That the foundation might be laid distinctly in that people with which the everlasting covenant had been made, He gave the first formal commission to Twelve, and Twelve only. Hence the solicitude of the Eleven to supply the place of Judas.[1] For the sake of typical consistency there must be twelve to receive the great gift of the Spirit. In the new Pentecost, as in the old, the tribes must all be represented. As a four-squared city, with twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve foundation-stones, the new Jerusalem is let down out of Heaven, and begins to shed her light upon the nations of them that are saved.[2]

Typical consistency.

But the historic continuity of the old Church and new being thus most fully and symmetrically expressed, in the organizing of the original Apostolic College, in the preaching of the Gospel for so many years to the Jews almost exclusively, and afterwards in making the first offer[3] of salvation to them in all places where they were found, there was no longer any need of strict adherence to the typical arrangement. The fruitful bough was to run over the wall of Judaic concisionism. The "Twelve" were to expand into the "Seventy."[4] Accordingly, as soon as

The Seventy typical of the Superstructure.

[1] It is to be noticed that Judas fell before the Apostolic commission was formally given. He was never, therefore, an Apostle in the full sense of the word.

[2] Rev. xxi. 10–27.

[3] This course was followed even by the "Apostles to the Gentiles."

[4] This number naturally leads one to such texts as Exod. i. 5; xv. 27; Numb. xi. 16; xxiv. 25; Ezek. viii. 11: that is, to the Seventy heads of families, prophets, elders, who were called to participate in the ministry of Moses. The *first* reference, therefore, of the Seventy, as of the Twelve, is to the Mosaic dispensation. But behind all these passages there are the Seventy *families of the nations*, among whom the whole earth was divided: Gen. x.; in which chapter, again, we find not only the seventy names, representative

the Church had found an open door for its larger mission, and had begun to go forth beyond the bounds of Israel proper, the number of Apostles was indefinitely increased.

With this multiplication of the chief ministry the name of S. Paul is particularly connected. His call to the Apostolate synchronized with that outgoing of Church life and shedding of the Spirit upon the Gentiles, that second Pentecost, as it were, which followed the martyrdom of S. Stephen:[5] his actual commencement of mission work with the gathering of a Hellenic Church in Antioch, and with the departure, one by one, of the Apostles to their more distant fields. His name (with that of Barnabas, and many others) is thus associated with the outermost of the three great circles of the Apostolic mission. With Jerusalem, Judæa, Samaria, he had little to

S. Paul's Mission.

of the nations, but twelve particularly distinguished as *fathers* or *founders;* so that in the twelve, as well as in the seventy, there seems to be an *ultimate* reference to the Church universal. This is confirmed by Rev. iv. 4, where twenty-four Elders are round about the throne; viz., twelve for the Jewish and twelve for the Gentile Church. I may here observe, that when numbers are used in SS. for symbolic purposes, we are not to regard them always as mathematically correct. Thus, in Matt. i. the fourteen generations are not all the generations that might be counted in the period given. So the seventy and the twelve were not *all the Disciples* of our Lord; for in Acts, i. 15, we find the number of the names to be about one hundred and twenty. The same may be said of the list of names in Gen. x. On the whole, it seems to me that in choosing twelve and seventy under the general name of Disciples, our Lord provided for a subsequent enlargement of the Apostolate, and guarded against the mistake of those who would superstitiously confine the office to the exact number of twelve; or, who would make any other distinction than that of mere *priority* of commission, between the original Apostolic College and those who in course of time were added to it.

[5] This, according to Dr. Jarvis, was the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel. See *Church of the Redeemed*, Period V., pp. 247, 497.

do. His witness was to the world. Among those twelve "names," which S. John represents as written on the "twelve foundations" of the "great city," his name is not included.

Equal to the Twelve.

It is of great importance, therefore, that S. Paul, as the type of the enlarged Apostolate, was in point of commission, of authority, and in every thing, in fact, except priority of calling, fully equal to "them which were Apostles before" him; that "the uncircumcision was committed" to him as largely "as the circumcision was unto Peter;" that "James, Cephas, and John," those universally acknowledged "pillars," perceived the grace given unto him, and extended to him and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship." The Ministry to the Gentiles was thus put on a footing of entire equality with the original Ministry to the Jews. The branches grafted into the old stock of Israel received all the power and virtue of the stock itself.

Companions of S. Paul.

Barnabas.

Of that numerous band of sons, disciples, colleagues, or fellow-laborers, who accompanied S. Paul in his travels, and some of whose names are associated with his, apparently on equal terms, in the superscription of the Epistles, Barnabas parted from him in the second missionary journey, and taking Mark with him, labored afterwards in Cyprus, his native country. So long as the two remained together, Barnabas held the position of leader; so that the heathen distinguished them respectively as *Jupiter* and *Mercurius*. He seems to have been a man of great suavity and dignity of character, and we may infer from his conduct with regard to Mark, that in his proper sphere as a "son of consolation" he showed no little firmness. It is interesting to

notice, that all the intimates of S. Paul, so far as we have the means of judging, were distinguished by traits of character the complementary opposites of his own.

Timothy, a disciple or son, and, as he appears in many places, a colleague of S. Paul, had a feminine delicacy, amounting it would seem to something like natural timidity[6] of character. But the grace of God, in his case as in that of other Apostles, proved superior to any such infirmity; and S. Paul regarded him with peculiar and tender affection. During the life-time of S. Paul, he had frequent occasion to exercise temporarily, in various places to which he was sent, the gift and authority of an Apostle.[7] After his death, he became, according to the unanimous testimony of the ancients, the settled Bishop of Ephesus in Asia Minor; a post, for which his gentleness and refinement of character seem eminently to have fitted him. Titus, in like manner, is said to have become the permanent chief-pastor of the Church in Crete. Silas, or Silvanus, and Sosthenes were also reckoned among Apostles, their names, like that of Timothy, being associated with S. Paul's in letters to the Churches; but of their position in later times there is no certain record. The same remark applies to Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, Onesimus, Carpus, Erastus, Crescens, and many others to whom tradition assigns the name "Apostle and Bishop," and sometimes "Martyr." But tradition is a sieve, which seldom preserves more than the husks of a life. The name and office, and sometimes the field of labor, may remain: the

Timothy.

Titus.

Silas, and others.

[6] 1 Cor. xvi. 10; 2 Tim. i. 6–8.
[7] Rom. xvi. 21; 2 Cor. i. 19; Phil. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 2.

deeds, the words, the finer traits of character, almost invariably escape.[8]

S. Luke.

S. Luke is one of the few companions of S. Paul, to whom tradition does not appear to have assigned a particular local charge. He lived, it is said, to a great age. He was with S. Paul in his last imprisonment; and from the peculiar summary of trials in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy, as compared with the account of the first missionary journey related in the Acts,[9] one might conjecture, that the Apostle, when he wrote, had been quite recently engaged in recounting to the Evangelist that early portion of his history. Death may have intervened, before he came to the period of his more recent labors, after the first imprisonment in Rome: and as S. Luke wrote only what he had seen himself, or had received from eye-witnesses,[10] the abrupt conclusion of the Acts may be thus accounted for.

John Mark.

John Mark, frequently confounded with S. Mark the Evangelist, was probably the same whom S. Paul commends to the Colossians[11] as a nephew of S. Barnabas; who was with the same Apostle in Rome, during his first imprisonment, as a fellow-laborer; and whose services he particularly desired at a later period.[12] If so, it is a pleasing reflection, that the young man, who abandoned the two Apostles in their first missionary journey, and was the occasion of a fierce contention in the second, afterwards was enabled so amply to redeem his character.

These, and many others, some of whose names are

[8] Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, gives with discrimination, but not in a skeptical spirit, all that is known on this and similar subjects.

[9] Tim. iii. 11; Acts, xiv.

[10] Luke, i. 2.

[11] Coloss. iv. 10.

[12] Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

preserved only in obscure traditions, constituted the company of S. Paul: his Apostolic staff, as it were, by whose active coöperation, as Apostles or Messengers of the Churches, he was enabled to maintain a constant and vigilant superintendence of the vast and growing field of his planting. Among these, also, he found the trustworthy men to whom he could commit the whole burden of his own "care of the Churches," when he was obliged to leave it.

His Helpers and Successors.

CHAPTER VI.

MISSION OF THE TWELVE—MADNESS OF JEWS AND HEATHEN.

Of the labors of the Twelve in the wider field of their mission, the records are surprisingly scant, and the traditions unsatisfactory. Three only of their number received surnames from the Lord; and, with the exception of these three, their names are written only on the Judaic foundation-stones. Indeed, one of this smaller number, S. James, surnamed the Greater, the elder brother of S. John, was taken to his rest by martyrdom[1] before the Gentile superstructure was generally begun.

The Twelve.

S. James the Greater.

S. Andrew, the first called of the Apostles, in whom we recognize the amiable traits of his brother Simon without the fervid genius of that great Apostle, is said to have preached in Scythia and Sogdiana,

S. Andrew

[1] Acts, xii. 2.

and was crucified in Greece. The letter describing his death, professedly written by the Presbyters and Deacons of Achaia, is either spurious or grossly interpolated.

S. Thomas. The name of S. Thomas is associated with the memory of evangelical labors in Parthia, Persia, and India; though the application of the last of these names is somewhat doubtful. S. James the

S. James the Less. Less, the son of Alphæus, has been commonly identified by Latin writers with James the Just, the

S. Jude. first Bishop of Jerusalem. If not thus identified, it is quite uncertain where he labored. S. Jude, surnamed Thaddæus, or Lebbæus, the brother of James, journeyed to Lybia, it is said, and preached also in Arabia, Idumæa, and Mesopotamia. He is not to be confounded with another Thaddæus, one of the Seventy, who in fulfilment of a promise said to have been made by our Lord to Abgar,[2] King of Edessa, went as Apostle to that city, and labored

S. Philip. there with great honor and success. S. Philip, frequently confounded with Philip, one of the seven

SS. Bartholomew, Matthew, Matthias, and Simon. Deacons, preached in Scythia and Phrygia. S. Bartholomew went to Armenia and India; S. Matthew and S. Matthias to Ethiopia; S. Simon, the Chananite, to some part of Mesopotamia. The name Simon, however, was so common among the Pentecostal preachers, that the two Apostles so named had many things accredited to them in tradition which in all probability belonged to other evangelists.

It has been generally believed, that the majority

[2] Euseb., i. 13. The Letter of our Lord, preserved in the archives of Edessa, is supported by respectable testimony, but does not *look* genuine. It may, however, have been a verbal answer from our Lord, committed to writing from memory by some of the King's ministers. See, also, Evagrius, *Eccl. Hist.*, iv. 27.

of the Apostles, and, perhaps, all of them except S. John, suffered death by martyrdom.[3] This is admitted to have been the case with four out of the five whose history is best known. One thing is certain, that wherever the first preachers went they carried their lives in their hands. Without judging harshly of the Roman laws, which, considering the general character of the superstitions they were aimed at,[4] were sufficiently tolerant, the Gospel was in its very nature a *martyrium:* a testimony unto death, before magistrates, kings, and nations, against all that was held sacred by the bulk of the heathen world. Had it been content to take a place among the crowd of national or local superstitions, it would probably have continued unmolested. But such a position was against its very nature. It came before men as a novelty, which provoked contempt; it was uncompromising, which awakened hatred; it was wonderfully successful, which touched the innumerable nerves of self-interest, local or sect pride, prejudice, superstition, and the like, which lie thick beneath the surface of civilized society. The Jews resented it as a heresy. The heathen looked upon it with suspicion, or contempt, as a corruption of Judaism. To men of the world, generally, its condemnation of tolerated sins and its bold predictions of righteous judgment would present themselves in the light of *odium generis humani:* a gloomy antagonism to the reckless and jovial spirit of cultivated society.

Causes of opposition.

All this is plain enough from that portion of Church history recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

[3] Mosheim's argument to the contrary is founded on a very partial interpretation of a passage from Clement of Alexandria, and from Polycrates of Ephesus.

[4] *Sacra peregrina.*

Accumulative force.

In those simple narratives we see the rancor of the Jews awakened, not in Palestine only, but in every place of their dispersion, at the first indications of prosperity on the part of the Gospel, kindling into more furious hostility as the signs of success increased, and communicating itself like a sort of contagious phrensy to the better disposed Gentiles. But at the point where the inspired history ends, the state of the world was growing worse daily. The causes of persecution, whether in the Jewish or heathen world, were rapidly accumulating in overwhelming force.

Madness of the Jews.

From the reign of the Emperor Tiberius till the destruction of the holy City, the Jews were becoming constantly more entangled in seditions, tumults, plots, and insurrectionary movements. They had chosen Barabbas instead of Christ; and every Barabbas who offered himself to them was hailed as a Messiah. The wanton tyranny of Caligula exasperated this spirit, by placing the abomination of idols in Jewish houses of worship. Hence riots and massacres, both in Egypt and Palestine.[5] The reign of Claudius, Caligula's successor, was marked by similar commotions; and in a disturbance that took place in Jerusalem, during the week of the Passover, more than twenty thousand persons are said to have been slain, or trampled to death. A famine of several years added to the sufferings of this period. When Nero came to the throne, the sacred City and the whole of Palestine had fallen a prey to fanatical sects; and robber bands and assassins flourished under the guise of patriotism and religion. A

A.D. 54–63.

[5] Philo in *Flacc.*, etc.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8.

glimpse is afforded us of this state of things, and of its effect upon the security of the Christians, in the account, given us in the Acts, of S. Paul's eventful visit to the sacred city of his people. Not long after, similar tumults arising, James of Jerusalem was put to death. This, again, was followed A. D. 65. soon by the commencement of the Judaic war; in consequence of which, according to the testimony of Josephus,[6] a fearful commotion seized upon the populace throughout all Syria, and everywhere the inhabitants of the cities destroyed the Jews without mercy, so that the streets were strewn with unburied and naked corpses.

It was a time, in fact, of universal madness and misrule. Nero's tyranny was succeeded by the wilder, and still more bloody anarchy of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The page of the philosophic historian of the Romans is as black as that of the A.D. 68–70. learned Jew, with the tragic record of treasons, plots, conspiracies, portents in the natural and civil world, horrible massacres, and a recklessness of human life passing all imagination. In Rome, where civil war was raging from street to street, the mob looked on and applauded, as at a gladiator show. "If any one hid in a house or shop, they shouted to the soldiers to drag him out, and slay him." For, as the historian[7] fearfully adds, "the military were so intent on carnage, that the greater part of the booty fell to the populace. There were all the horrors of Rome. a city taken by storm, with all the merriment and licentiousness of the most luxurious times of peace: battles and piles of corpses; eating-houses and

Of the Heathen.

[6] Quoted by Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 26. [7] Tacit. *Hist.* iii. 83.

baths; soldiers with bloody swords, harlots in flaunting dresses: all was so mixed up, that it would be difficult to say whether the city was in a fury, or on a frolic." Nor did the rural districts of Italy escape the common woe. "Everywhere there were rapes, robbery, and bloodshed; citizens dressed themselves as soldiers to assassinate their enemies; the soldiers seized every thing they could lay hands on, without rebuke from their superiors. Italy was not merely exhausted, it was fairly trampled into ruin by the wantonness of foot and horse."[8]

Italy.

Prodigies and omens.

To add to the terrors of the times, the popular mind was haunted with prodigies and omens. "In the vestibule of the Capitol, Victory dropped her chariot-reins; from a cell of Juno's temple there came forth a gigantic spectre; on a serene and cloudless day, the statue of the Emperor Julius turned round and faced the East; an ox in Etruria opened its mouth and spake." Such stories, little heeded in times of peace, but at this period readily believed and circulated, show at least the state of the public mind. It was more remarkable, that real disasters, such as an unprecedented overflow of the Tiber, followed by a general famine, made less impression as calamities than as omens.[9] Every affliction cast a shadow still blacker than itself.

General Calamities.

Under these circumstances, the fearful picture, drawn by the Jewish historian, of the horrors, portents and calamities of his country, may be taken as a sample of the condition of the whole world. "No generation from the beginning of the world was more fruitful in wickedness. The misfortunes of

[8] Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 56.

[9] Tacit. *Hist.* i. 86.

the Jews were such, that the calamities of all men from the beginning of the world would be found slight in comparison with them." It was Gessius Florus, appointed Procurator in the tenth year of Nero, who by his cruelty and rapacity provoked them to rebellion against the Roman arms. The heathen of the various cities in which the Jews dwelt were encouraged to insult and harass them; and when outrages of this kind had excited them to insurrection, they were massacred in crowds, without pity or remorse. In this way thousands suffered in Ascalon, Cæsarea, Ptolemais, and in the cities of Syria and Egypt. Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, might have prevented the rebellion by measures of ordinary prudence and justice; or when it began might easily have crushed it in the bud. He did neither. His course was vigorous enough to increase the exasperation, but too dilatory to lead to any result. A feeble attempt to take Jerusalem was followed by a precipitate retreat, which degenerated into a flight and a panic. The Jews hung upon his rear, slew his best troops, and, elated by this easy triumph, carried on the war thenceforward in a spirit of desperation that hardly fell short of madness. For seven years society was completely disorganized. It was a conflict unillumined by a ray of hope. Suicide was preferred to submission to the Romans. Yet submission to the Romans was felt to be a far less evil than the triumph of the robbers and assassins, by whom, for the most part, the cause of rebellion was sustained. In short, the prophecy of our Lord was fulfilled to the letter.[10] Things

Gessius Florus.

First Siege of Jerusalem, A. D. 65.

[10] S. Matt. xxiv. 22. The remarkable coincidences, between the

came to such a pass in the end, that unless those days of mutual extermination had been mercifully shortened, no flesh would have been left alive.

The Lord's coming.

That terrible period, then, which is best described as the coming of our Lord in judgment upon the Jews—the sixth in order of those tremendous epochs which prefigure the final Judgment,[11]—was a time in which it was not only natural that the shepherds of the Flock should be smitten, but equally natural that the Flock should be too much disturbed to keep a careful record of the calamitous visitation. Christians were hated by the Jews, and equally hated as connected with the Jews. They were a ready and safe mark for private and public malice. And of the Roman magistrates in those days, while some might temporize like Pilate, some like Gallio might behave with a disdainful impartiality, and a few like Pliny might feel disposed to pity the oppressed: the great majority, no doubt, would easily give way to the outcry of the rabble. In the confusion that thus ensued, we can find the only satisfactory explanation of the vagueness of Church tradition, with regard to the latter days of most of the Apostles.

prophecy of our Lord and the language of Josephus in his account of the Judaic War, are well pointed out in "the Plain Commentary on the Four Holy Gospels."

[11] In the xxivth of S. Matthew, etc. The Judgment of Jerusalem, of Sodom, of the Flood, etc., all lead the mind forward to the final consummation. The six judgments are, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Flood, the Destruction of Sodom, the Drowning of Pharaoh, the Ruin of Solomon's Temple, and the final Destruction of Jerusalem, with the Abrogation of the Jewish Polity. For many useful suggestions on this subject see Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed.* Dr. Jarvis, however, divides the history of the world before the Christian era into *five* periods, including the day in Paradise in the period which terminates with the flood.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

JERUSALEM continued, till the time of the great Judgment upon that city, to be the centre of Apostolic conference and communion; the centre especially of that Christian Israel "scattered abroad," which, though absorbed in the one name of Judah, was the historical continuation of all the twelve tribes,[1] and was tolerated in the observance of Mosaic rites. Jerusalem and Christian Israel.

James, the universally respected head of this great stock, was eminently fitted for his peculiar and difficult position. He is said to have been consecrated to God from his birth, after the manner of the ancient Nazarites, and to have lived the life of a genuine ascetic. Foreseeing the judgments that were coming on his guilty nation, and wrestling continually in prayer for their conversion, he acquired among them the title of *Zaddick*, the Just, or *Ophlias*, the Bulwark of the People. His appointment to the Bishopric of Jerusalem is attributed by some to our Lord himself. It is certain, that he was admitted to the honor of a special interview with his Master, after the Resurrection.[2] James the Just.

As head of the Circumcision, "myriads" of whom had been converted before the last visit of S. Paul to

[1] James, i. 1.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 7.

His relations to S. Paul.

Jerusalem,[3] he was naturally exposed to the temptation of forming a party, or separate school, in the Church. There is no proof, however, that he yielded to this temptation. On the contrary, his relations to the Apostles of the Gentiles seem ever to have been of the most friendly kind. S. Paul evidently regarded him with reverence and affection. James, in his turn, not only gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, but in reference to the questions mooted by the Judaizing faction, expressed himself with a firmness and decision[4] not inferior to that of the great Apostle himself.

To his own People.

And towards those of his own kin who had not as yet received the Gospel he acted, there is reason to believe, with a wise, and charitable, and Christian-like forbearance. He avoided every thing calculated to excite the prejudices of the Jews. Those who visited Jerusalem from among the Gentile Churches were required to observe the same rule.[5]

His Epistle.

It may have been owing to this habit of noble as well as politic forbearance, that the Epistle of S. James, addressed as it is to the twelve tribes, and almost ignoring the difference between Jew and Christian, is so extremely reserved on the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel. With the Lord nigh at hand, with the Judge standing before the door,[6] and with a profound fellow-feeling for the difficulties and perplexities of the Jewish mind, the earnest and sober-minded Pastor may have felt, that the orthodoxy needed for the conversion of his countrymen was that of the heart and life, rather than of the head. Of faith,[7] in the form of dogmatism, the

[3] Acts, xxi. 20.
[4] Acts, xv. 13–21.
[5] Acts, xxi. 17–26.
[6] James, v. 7–9.
[7] James, ii. 14–26.

Synagogue, whether Jewish or Jewish-Christian, had enough and to spare. The Name of Christ might easily become, like the name of Moses, a mere symbol of lip-worship, a mere rallying-cry for the strife of tongues. In the bitterness of controversy, "that worthy name" might possibly be taken in vain.[8] Rather than incur such a risk, let the yea of faith be yea, and the nay simply nay. Christ is not confessed by vigorous asseverations. He is not heard in strife. In peace the fruits of righteousness are sown. The dew of Divine wisdom distils from a tranquil sky.[9] In a community occupying so critical a position, standing, as it were, between a doomed nation and a Judge near at hand, patience should be allowed to have her perfect work. The husbandman waiteth for the rain. Job waited for the end, and prayed for the friends who vexed him. Elias, a man like other men, a great and fiery heart full of passionate aches and yearnings, waited and prayed for rain; and the rain came at his request, and the parched earth yielded fruit. Such prayer, such patience, might still be found availing. The sinner might yet be converted from the error of his ways.[10] With the tenderness, then, of that mother, who won her child from the precipice, not by warning cries, but by a silent act of instinctive maternal love,[11] James yearned for the salvation of all Israel; and in his solicitude spoke with bated breath, lest the sharp distinctive word might startle them into madness, and so precipitate their ruin.

Christ not heard in strife.

The Prayer of Faith.

Such seems to have been the spirit of Judaic Christ-

[8] James, ii. 7; v. 12.
[9] James, iii. 13–18.
[10] James, v. 7–20.
[11] Greek Anthology, alluded to in Keble's *Christian Year*—"Commination."

The Spirit of Judaic Christianity.

ianity, in its better aspect. It was the religion of intercession; the embodiment of the Divine heart's desire that all Israel should be saved. It was the living continuation of the prayer of Jesus on the Cross. While Gentile Christianity, bold, free, and full of joy, was advancing Joshua-like in the line of spiritual aggression, Jerusalem, like Moses, was content with an humbler posture. She prayed for the victory which freer hands achieved.

The end of James, as related by the most ancient of Church Historians,[12] accords entirely with this view of his character and position.

Advantage was taken of the temporary anarchy that followed the death of Festus the Roman gov-

The end of James, A. D. 63.

ernor to stir up a tumult against the Christians. In the midst of the excitement some of the Sadducees addressed themselves to James. "Tell us," said they, "Who is Jesus?"[13] He answered, "The Saviour." Thereupon many of the Jews believed, both among the rulers and among the common people. But the Scribes and Pharisees, alarmed at the growing expectation of a speedy advent of Jesus in judgment upon their nation, determined to appeal to James's conservative and patriotic feelings. "We entreat thee, restrain the people, who are led astray after Jesus, as if He were the Messiah!" Then,

[12] *Hegesippus*—Euseb. ii. 23.

[13] Eusebius has it, "What is *the door* of Jesus?"—A manifest allusion to a common Christian phrase, but difficult to reconcile with James's answer. Mosheim and others have supposed that Eusebius has mistranslated his authority, and various readings are suggested. Without choosing among these conjectures, it may be remarked, that the vivid expectation of the Lord's coming speedily in judgment, doubtless made such phrases, e. g., "the Judge is at *the door*," more current than usual and a desire to know the meaning of these phrases may have suggested the peculiar form of the question.

conducting him to a conspicuous place on one of the wings of the Temple, they asked him the same question that the Sadducees had put to him before: "O Zaddick, declare to us, What is the door of Jesus, the Crucified!" He answered, "Why do ye ask me respecting Jesus the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of Power, and is about to come on the clouds of Heaven." Thereupon many of the people cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But others came behind him, and cast him down from the Temple; and as he raised himself, and knelt, repeating for the last time that prayer of his Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he was cruelly despatched with clubs and stones. His Confession.

He died, as he had lived, a patriot saint. The people knew this to be his character, and his martyrdom was spoken of among them as a public calamity. He was buried with honor near the Temple, and a pillar marked the place of his death. Honor paid to him.

The remorse of the Jews was increased by the signs of coming wrath which at that time began to thicken around the mother city, and to prepare the minds of the inhabitants for some terrible event. Signs of Judgment.

It was about this time, for example, that one Jesus, the son of Ananias, began to harrow men's souls with that terrible cry of *Woe*, which resounded for so many years through the streets and along the walls of the devoted city. With this were many other signs of a similar description. A fiery sword was seen waving in the air; embattled hosts appeared to be contending in the sky; the East gate of the Temple swung open of itself, and voices were heard crying, Let us go hence! In short, men's hearts Warnings.

were failing them for fear, and the popular mind was haunted with gloomy presentiments of impending judgment.[14]

Successors of James.

After the death of James, Symeon, a son of Cleophas and a cousin of the Lord, was, for that reason perhaps, elected in his place. Down to that time the Jewish Christian Church, though somewhat degenerated[15] from its purity and simplicity, had remained, as the ancients expressed it, a virgin in the faith. Now the seeds of heresy began to spring up.

Seeds of Heresy.

One Thibutis, a disappointed candidate for the office of Bishop, became the ringleader of a faction. The bias that existed towards low and fleshly views of the nature of the Messiah, the naturally disputatious and rationalistic turn of the Jewish mind, the disturbances that would necessarily arise from the gradual discontinuance of Mosaic rites on the part of the more enlightened, the general madness of the times, and last not least, the increasing isolation of Judaic Christianity, were so many seeds, as it were, of discord and dissension; so that the spirit of faction having once secured an entrance, every sort of error found in the divided flock its appropriate prey.

Jewish war.

In the mean time, however, the woes denounced so long beforehand against Jerusalem had come to a head. Seven years of rebellion against the Romans, attended with atrocities of every imaginable description, had only exasperated the intense hatred with which the foreign yoke was regarded. Finally, the city was besieged by Titus, whose father Vespasian

[14] Tacitus and Josephus both mention these signs.

[15] The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of S. James show that this degeneracy had begun.

had been called from the leadership in Judæa to the empire of the world; and after a mad struggle, unparalleled in the history of human wickedness and misery, it was taken and destroyed. The Temple was demolished. Such of the inhabitants as survived the horrors of the siege were sold for slaves, and scattered once more among the nations.

Jerusalem taken, A.D. 70 or 72.

The Christian Jews alone escaped the common fate. Remembering the predictions and commandment of the Lord, they had taken advantage of a lull in the storm of war, just after the first siege of the city and the repulse of the Roman army under Cestius Gallus,[16] and had withdrawn in a body to Pella, a city of Decapolis. There many of them remained, continuing the observance of Mosaic rites. Others returned, and dwelt, a sad flock, among the ruins of the city. In a subsequent persecution under Trajan, Symeon their Bishop received the crown of martyrdom; and Justus, after a factious opposition, was elected in his place. About the same time many thousands of the Jews were converted. The terror and the ruin which dogged them everywhere, must have added force in the minds of the more devout, to the arguments and claims of Christianity.

Christians retire to Pella, A.D. 65.

Conversions.

Justus died early in the second century, and was followed by a rapid succession of twelve Bishops, whose brief episcopates have led to the supposition of a violent persecution during that period. It may have been, that in choosing their chief pastors the Jewish Christians attached an undue importance to age, and to fleshly connection with the house of Da-

Jewish Bishops.

[16] Josephus mentions, that "after the calamity of Cestius, many of the most illustrious Jews departed from the city as from a sinking ship." Jos. *de Bell. Judaic.*

vid. Their spiritual rulers, therefore, were in all probability more venerable than efficient.

Mission of Judaism ended.

In fact, Judaic Christianity had already accomplished its mission in the world. Its peculiar rites, tolerated by the Apostles on the principle that "what decayeth and waxeth old is *ready to vanish away*," had lost all warrant for their continuance from the time that the Divine judgment had gone forth against Jerusalem and the Temple. Forty years[17] God had spoken to the Jews in their own tongue, as it were. Forty years He had waited for their repentance. To persevere longer in a system unfavorable to the free spirit of the Gospel, would only separate the Hebrews from their brethren of Christendom at large, and subject them to the dwarfing and deadening influence of sect and party feeling.

It is probable that this truth dawned but gradually on the minds of the Hebrew Christians. Being recognized by some, and more or less repudiated by others, it proved the occasion, as it were, of a new sifting of the nation. The strict Judaizers separated by degrees from their larger-minded brethren. A sect of Nazarenes arose, legalists and purists of the narrowest kind. The Ebionites, more actively rationalistic, adhered to the law, rejected the Divinity of Christ, and covered the nakedness of their unbelief with shreds of Gnostic speculation. The Sampsæans fell back upon a supposed primitive Jacobite tradi-

Nazarenes Ebionites, Sampsæans.

[17] Our Lord's ministry began about the year 30; the destruction of the Temple was in the year 70, or 72, on the same day of the week and month, on which Nebuchadnezzar had burnt the former temple. Many other coincidences, manifestly showing that Judaism had come to an end, are to be found in Dr. Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed;* also, in Foulkes' *Man. of Ec. Hist.*

tion. These, and perhaps many other obscure sects, sprang in course of time from the now cold and sluggish blood of Judaic Christianity.

Second overthrow, A. D. 135.

The deliverance of the mother Church of Christendom from influences of this kind seems to have been consummated by the second, and, so far as the Circumcision was concerned, decisive overthrow of the sacred city.

Bar Cochba.

The Emperor Hadrian, provoked by the long series of rebellions, which the infatuated Jews continued to renew; provoked especially by the insurrection of Bar Cochba, that baleful "son of a star," whose claims to the Messiahship had to be quenched in the blood of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen: destroyed whatever remains were left of the Jewish metropolis; and built upon its site a Gentile colony under the name of Ælia Capitolina, forbidding the Jews and every thing Jewish to enter its walls any more.[18]

Gentile succession, A. D. 135.

From that time forth, the Jewish Christians, under Marcus, a bishop of Gentile extraction, the sixteenth from S. James in order of descent, became a homogeneous portion of the mass of Catholic believers; and Jerusalem, or Ælia, recovered something of its pristine glory, as one of the principal Apostolic Sees.

Of those, who refused to conform to the new order of things, the greater part were absorbed in Gnostic or Ebionite sects.

[18] Sulpicius Severus, quoted and discussed by Mosheim: *Comm.* xxviii. 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

S. PETER—S. MARK—S. CLEMENT.

S. Peter's position.

S. PETER's labors are sufficiently well known to show the fulfilment of the promises made to him by our Lord, but beyond that point are matter of conjecture only. Being the first to confess the Divinity of Christ, he became the first stone[1] in the spiritual foundation of the Church. He held the keys, and

His use of the Keys.

was not slow to use them, by which the door of the kingdom was opened to the three great divisions of the human race. To the Jews in Jerusalem, to the Samaritans in Samaria, and to the Gentiles in Cæsarea, these cities being the centres respectively of the three races in Palestine, he was foremost in giving the seal of sonship and adoption. Finally, having resided for a while in Cæsarea and Antioch,

[1] S. Matt. xvi. 17–19; Peter is *Petros*, not Petra: a distinction not to be overthrown by any *supposed* Aramaic original used by our Lord. Whatever word our Lord may have used, the Greek of the New Testament is the language of the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost came as the Interpreter of the words of our Lord. If the Holy Ghost, therefore, calls Simon *Petros*, and the Rock on which the Church was built *Petra*, we ought to adhere to the distinction. While on this subject, I may remark, that the Rock seems to be the Scripture symbol of the Divinity, and the Stone, of the Humanity of our Lord. The Church, of course, was founded on both. *The keys* are by many regarded as synonymous with the power of *binding and loosing*. It seems more natural to apply the figure to the first *admission* to the Church; especially as that admission was accompanied in Samaria and Jerusalem by two terrible examples of *exclusion*. This primary application, however, does not preclude the other and more common sense.

and having labored, perhaps, in the countries mentioned in his first Epistle, he closed his career in Rome in company with S. Paul. He was crucified, it is said, with his head downward.

His visits to Rome.

The account given by Eusebius of a supposed visit to Rome, just after the conversion of Cornelius, is liable to objection, not only from the silence of the Acts and of the Epistle to the Romans, but from the over close resemblance between this alleged visit and that which took place at a later period; an encounter with Simon Magus being common to both occasions. Nothing is more natural in tradition than to make two events out of two accounts of one and the same event.

His travels.

His travels being much in the direction of S. Paul's —to Cæsarea, Antioch, the countries mentioned in his first Epistle, possibly Corinth, possibly Babylon in Egypt, and more certainly Rome—he seems, according to an understanding with that Apostle, to have addressed himself mainly to the Hebrews, or "strangers scattered abroad."[2] Hence, in establishing the Episcopate in Antioch and Rome, S. Paul and he are said to have acted in concert. In the former city Euodius and Ignatius were appointed the first Bishops,—Euodius over the Jewish, and Ignatius over the Gentile converts:[3] the two races, it

Bishoprics founded.

[2] 1 Pet. i. The Epistle is written for Gentile Christians (ii. 10): But the style of address shows, that S. Peter regarded them from the Judaic point of view—as sojourners, strangers scattered abroad, etc.

[3] Such is the conjecture of Baronius, following the assertion of the Apostolic Constitutions; though the fact of *more than one Bishop* appointed to a city may be as well or better explained by that *collegiate* principle on which the Apostles so often acted. It might be also, that in a troublous period, when synods could not be held, and Bishops could not assemble from different cities, it would be thought best to secure

is supposed, remaining for a while distinct in their places and modes of worship. Afterwards, in that great phrensy of expiring Judaism which extended to all parts of the Roman world, Euodius was slain in an outbreak of the Heathen against the Jews; and his separate charge, abandoning their peculiarities, became under Ignatius an homogeneous portion of the now united flock. Similar events may have taken place in Rome. It must be confessed, however, that the ultimate fusion of the Jew and Gentile Churches is one of the obscurest points in early Church history.

His gift pastoral.

S. Peter's character, and there is solid reason to believe his "gift," or peculiar work, were eminently pastoral.[4] His natural impulsiveness, his proneness to precipitous extremes, and, above all, the affectionateness of his disposition, made him, when disciplined by grace, the more capable of sympathizing largely with men of every sort, and of distinguishing complementary opposites from those really antagonistic and irreconcilable. In this respect his threefold denial may have been as useful to him as his threefold confession. Having experienced that infirmity of "amazement"[5] to which the "lambs" are liable, he was the better able to have compassion for it.

His strength and weakness.

Having needed strengthening himself, he was the more ready to "strengthen the brethren." It is remarkable, however, that the latest inspired record of this great Apostle exhibits him in his weakness,

a sort of synodal action by having two, or three, or more Bishops in each of the great centres. See book ii., chap. x.

[4] John, xxi. 15–17. It seems to me characteristic of the two Apostles, that S. Paul calls our Lord "the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession," but S. Peter entitles Him "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

[5] 1 Pet. iii. 6.

rather than in his strength. When he first went to Antioch,[6] he showed his appreciation of the grace given to the Gentiles, and of their entire equality with the Jews, by freely eating with them; but afterwards, yielding to the urgency of the Judaizing party, he withdrew from this position, and exposed himself thereby to the censure of S. Paul. Of the events of his later life even tradition says little. From his second Epistle we gather, that, like S. Paul, he was forewarned of the approach of death,[7] and saw the fiery trials that were coming upon the Church. It is equally certain, that he did what in him lay to provide for all emergencies. That he was ever Bishop of Antioch and Rome, in the strict sense of the word,[8] is warranted by no reliable testimony of the early Church; but that he and S. Paul appointed the first Bishops of those cities seems to have been generally admitted.

Censured by S. Paul.

S. Peter was a married man; and his "company," as may be inferred from a passage of S. Paul, was graced by those genial influences of domestic life, which the Jews in travelling, were more accustomed than the Heathen to "lead about" with them.[9] His most intimate associates were first S. John, afterwards S. James of Jerusalem, S. Barnabas, and finally S. Paul.

His wife.

[6] Gal. ii. 11.

[7] 2 Pet. i. 14.

[8] The claim that he was seven years Bishop of Antioch, and twenty or twenty-five years Bishop of Rome, involves chronological and other difficulties without number. See Barrow on the *Pope's Supremacy*. Tillemont (*Memoires, etc.*), in his endeavor to reconcile this claim with facts, shows his embarrassment at every step: Tom. i. part 2.

[9] 1 Cor. ix. 5. Peter's wife, tradition says, was a worthy helpmeet. When summoned "to go home" by the path of martyrdom, she obeyed the summons with joy. Euseb. iii. 30. Clem. Alex. *Stromat.* vii.

S. Mark. S. Mark the Evangelist, his chosen "Son," or Disciple, he sent to Alexandria, where, after preaching the Gospel in various parts of Egypt, he established the "Evangelic See," and left Annianus Bishop.

S. Clement. S. Clement of Rome, left as Bishop of that See with Linus and Cletus, became sole Pastor after the death of these two, and is the author of the only uninspired record now extant of the Church in the first century.

It is a fraternal Epistle from the Church of Rome to that of Corinth, occasioned by a factious attempt in the latter city to depose certain Presbyters from their office. Hence the letter is largely occupied with questions of Church order. The writer sees a law of harmony and proportion in all the works of God. Sun and moon, earth and stars, the tides of the sea, the seasons of the year, the shifting winds, the everflowing fountains, and all the innumerable tribes of living creatures, move freely, but harmoniously, in the order that God has foreordained and unalterably established. The same principle must apply to God's spiritual kingdom. His worship is not to be left to fancy or caprice. His word is not to be divided by all men alike. The Chief Priest has his proper office; the Priests theirs; the Levites theirs; and the Layman is called to the work of legitimate lay service. All are not Prefects; all are not Chiliarchs; all are not Centurions. Each has his vocation, each his appointed place. It remains, therefore, for each to attend to his own business in that particular station to which it hath pleased God to call him. This, with many charitable exhortations, is the sum of the Saint's counsel to the turbu-

Epistle to the Corinthians.

All things subject to law.

lent Corinthians; a counsel so highly appreciated in those times, that the sedition was appeased, and the Epistle was for a long while read publicly in the Churches, with a respect hardly inferior to that paid to the Canon of inspiration.

Questions of order how settled.

This admirable Letter, like the Pastoral Epistles of S. Paul, serves to mark that crisis in Church History, when questions of order, naturally postponed in the first effusion of Pentecostal life, had to be considered and deliberately settled. The Churchman, the Bishop, the Divine, is now taking the place of the Evangelist or Apostle. The Tabernacle once reared by the first Preachers, it devolves upon their successors to drive the stakes and stretch the cords. With Clement in Rome, John in Ephesus, Ignatius in Antioch, Symeon in Jerusalem, and Annianus in Alexandria, to superintend the work, there is every assurance that it was done well and wisely; so that God was the author of the order, as well as of the doctrine, which, on the lifting of the curtain of the second great Act of the Church's history, we find to be everywhere prevailing, and everywhere the same.

CHAPTER IX.

S. JOHN.

S. John the survivor of the Apostolic College.

S. JOHN, the beloved disciple, differed from his brethren in this respect, that his main work seems to have begun about the time that they were summoned to their rest. For his peculiar mission he

had to tarry, as it were, until the Lord came.[1] His influence was reserved for the generation that came after the doom of the Holy City.

Removes to Asia Proper.

Soon after the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul, he removed to Asia Proper, a field in which the wheat was already mingled with the tares of pernicious speculations. He afterwards visited Rome, and in the persecution under Domitian, was banished to the Isle of Patmos. On the accession of Nerva, he returned to Asia, and, at the request of the Bishops of that Province, assumed the Episcopate of Ephesus, which then lay vacant. There he quietly awaited the time of his departure, confining his preaching, it is said, to the simple exhortation, "Little children, love one another!" Towards the end of his life he was so infirm, that he had to be carried into church.[2]

Rome.

Patmos. A. D. 96.

Ephesus.

His character. Son of Thunder.

Judging from the traditions of this period of his life, John continued still to be a Son of Thunder,—the thunder not the less terrible, that it came from a cloudless sky. Less demonstrative than Peter, and with less sympathy, perhaps, for common-place passions and infirmities, he loved the Divine Word with an intense and contemplative devotion; and "the brethren" he loved, as idealized in Him, as shielded by His luminous presence from all contact or approach of the Evil One. To Him God was Light, without a shade of Darkness. There was no middle ground in his view, no shading, no perspective. His eagle eye knew no such thing as twilight. He loved the Truth, and hated lies. Half-truths, half-lies,

[1] S. John, xxi. 22.

[2] Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iii. 18, 23, 24, 31; v. 24, Clemens Alexandr. *Quis Dives Salvus?* 42.

or half-love for either, had no place in his conceptions.

Such a character is too pure and single, too inward and upward-looking, for ordinary occasions. It needs a special crisis to draw it out from its luminous sphere. When the moral atmosphere becomes lethargic and pestilential, so that a new and quickening power is imperatively demanded, then is the time for the Sons of Thunder to awake. At other times sheathed in imperturbable serenity, they know not themselves what spirit they are of, and are still less open to superficial observers. Suited to a particular crisis.

It is highly probable, that the early death of James, the elder of the two brothers, was occasioned by some lightning-burst of zeal thus specially awakened. Herod had James summarily beheaded; but Simon Peter, a more prominent, and ordinarily a more impetuous leader, he was content to cast into prison. The Son of Thunder, it is likely, had in some way or other touched the tyrant to the quick. His brother James an early Martyr.

Of the younger son of Zebedee, two acts remain to show, that the spirit which would call down fire from heaven upon the heads of the Samaritans, was rather chastened than extinguished by the power of Divine grace. On one occasion he fled with horror from a public bath, because the heretic Cerinthus happened to be there. No house could stand, that harbored an enemy of the Truth! At another time he had entrusted a youthful convert to the pastoral care of a certain Bishop not far from Ephesus. The youth fell away, and became a leader of banditti. When John heard of it, he smote his head, rent his clothes, and having vehemently rebuked the remissness of the Shepherd, went himself among the robbers in Traditions. Cerinthus. Young Disciple.

quest of the lost sheep. His yearning love was wonderfully rewarded. He brought back the youth a penitent, and restored him to the Church.

His influence anti-gnostic.

With love such as this, tempered by God's grace and sheathed ordinarily in a serenity of character, childlike, affectionate, equable, and profound, S. John was the man of all others to cope with those "grievous wolves," the theosophic heresies of the last quarter of the century, whose approach S. Paul had so solemnly predicted to the Ephesian shepherds.[3] He had the eagle eye to discern the spoiler from afar; the sudden swoop of the eagle to strike him down. His intuitive quickness of perception, united as it was to a soaring imagination and a virgin heart, qualified him not only to bring out a true Christian *gnosis* face to face with the false gnosis[4] of the heretic, but to array it in a garb of majestic simplicity and beauty. The demonstration of this power was reserved for a time of peculiar peril to the Faith. At a period when Christianity was becoming an object of theoretic scrutiny, when a speculative and highly imaginative philosophy was displaying its gorgeous hues before the eyes of the refined and sensitive Greeks of Asia Minor, and when every lie found it necessary to assume a profoundly mystic and religious shape, then, and there, was the true sphere found of the Apostolic Divine and Prophet. His utterances, childlike, clear as crystal, but with much of that "terrible crystal" which in Ezekiel's vision overarches the canopy of heaven, were admirably adapted to such a state of things.

Christian gnosis.

His style.

[3] Acts, xx. 29, 30.

[4] "Oppositions of *science* falsely so called." 1 Tim. vi. 20.

In other respects, also, S. John merited his title as the Apostle of Love. For, as love is the bond of all perfectness, the complement of all virtues, and the fulfilling of all law, it would seem to have been the privilege of the beloved Disciple to give the last finish to the foundation work of his brethren; and as Apostle, Prophet, Doctor, Evangelist, and Pastor, to supply whatever might be lacking in the organization, or whatever might be desirable for the strength and beauty, of the Church. Apostle of Love.

His Gospel, written late in life, is the key-stone, as it were, of evangelic history. His Epistles are eminently an *epitome*, or summary, or rather a kind of sublimated essence, of the Faith. His Revelation, in like manner, contains the substance of all prophecy: its gorgeous visions gathering like many-colored clouds around the sunset of inspiration, blending in one harmonious whole the glories of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and illumining the entire field of the Church's conflicts to the end of time. His Gospel, Epistles, Revelation.

Considering the peculiarities of his character and position, there is inherent probability in the story, that he set his seal, as it were, to the three Gospels of his predecessors, and perhaps to the whole Canon of inspiration. Living thirty years within the region to which most of the Epistles are addressed, he could hardly have been unacquainted with them. One of the four great Liturgies is ascribed to him,[5] at least in Import of his later life.

[5] Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ*. Polycrates (*apud Euseb.*) mentions that he wore the "*petalon* of high-priest." The title, the Elder or Presbyter, that S. John applies to himself in his second and third Epistles, may indicate that his "gift," or particular vocation, lay in the quiet duties of the sanctuary, rather than in the more stirring life of a missionary Apostle. It was S. Paul's "gift" to lay the foundation; it may have been equally S. John's to build upon

its germ, or outline. His name is associated also with the Asiatic custom of observing the Jewish Pascha. Without laying undue stress upon particulars of this kind, there was doubtless a special Providence in his long and peaceful residence among the Churches of Asia. The second generation is always a critical period in the history of religious bodies. The first love passing away, there follows a season of lukewarmness, or of alternate heats and chills. Heresies begin to show themselves, schisms are engendered. The most trivial differences of opinion fester and gangrene into causes of separation. That the Church, so widely diffused, so heterogeneous in materials, moving in such a chaos of opinions and amid such scenes of religious and civil strife as the world at that time presented, should not only have passed this critical stage of her existence without serious loss, but should have presented at its close a spectacle of unity and uniformity which has been the wonder of all ages, must be ascribed in the first place to an overruling wisdom unfathomable to man; and in the second place to S. John, as the chief of the chosen instruments employed by that wisdom. "Little children, love one another," was not with him a mere word of exhortation. It was the symbol of a great power of discipline and order. It was the dove-like spirit of a holy conservatism. For thirty

Second generation critical.

Unity of the Church,

foundations already laid. The term "Presbyter," however, as used by S. John, seems to stand for high position of any kind ("the four and twenty Elders," for example), and not for Presbyters in the restricted sense. Neander concludes from its use in the two Epistles, that they were not written by John the Apostle, but by some presbyter of that name. He seems not to notice the force of the definite article. It is not *a* Presbyter or Elder, but *the* Elder; evidently pointing to some one person, to whom alone that designation could apply.

years in the person of S. John, and for nearly a hundred years in him and his noble contemporaries who overlived him, the same spirit pervaded the Province of Asia; and from that living and loving centre was communicated to the Churches in all quarters of the world.

Especially in Asia.

The persecution under Domitian, commonly reckoned as the second of the general persecutions, in which S. John was banished to Patmos, having escaped unhurt, as the story goes, from a caldron of boiling oil,[6] was general rather in the wide alarm it caused, than either in its severity or duration. It seems, in fact, to have been nothing more than one of the tyrant's innumerable caprices. His jealousy of every thing noble and illustrious had been excited by a rumor of certain descendants of King David being yet alive in some part of Judæa. When he found, however, that these were simple and poor men, his anger against the Christians ceased, or was diverted into other channels.

Second general persecution, A. D. 95.

CHAPTER X.

HOLY WOMEN.

The high position held by woman, both in the Gospels and in the Acts, would render the story of this century incomplete, if at least some allusion

Holy women in tradition and history.

[6] This story is mentioned by Tertullian. Whatever the testimony may be worth, one can readily imagine, that S. John's peculiar phrase, "an unction from the Holy One," might suggest just such a punishment to the cruel and frivolous mind of a tyrant like Domitian. Tertull. *de Præscript. Hæreticor.* 36.

were not made to those who may be called the first heroines of Christianity. With regard to them, however, History has proved less mindful than Inspiration and Tradition. Inspiration has preserved their names. Tradition has fondly embellished them with beautiful though inconsistent traits. To History nothing is left but the ungrateful task of confessing how little is known about them; little, at all events, beyond the pregnant hints given in the New Testament.

The Mother of our Lord.

S. Mary, the Mother of our Lord, was committed by Him to the care of the beloved Disciple; and with him she remained, probably, till summoned to her rest. We see her first as a devout and holy Virgin, receiving in simple but thoughtful faith the wonderful message of the Angel; then as a matron, and mother, sympathizing readily with the household cares of her friends,[1] and anxious for her Son, on one occasion with sorrowful solicitude,[2] and on another with a shade of natural misgiving;[3] then, as one of the few who stood beside His Cross; and, lastly, as a widow, without children or others near of kin to whom she could be confided, left therefore to the care of the virgin Disciple,[4] and engaged with the other women, and with the Apostles and Disciples, in the daily worship of the Church. Within

[1] S. John, ii. 3.
[2] S. Luke, ii. 48.
[3] S. Mark, iii. 21, 31.
[4] Her being thus left to John is fatal to the weak argument made by Neander and some others, in favor of the theory that James of Jerusalem was her son. James survived, till just before the Judaic war; his brothers (as we learn from Hegesippus in Eusebius) were still alive, as eminent Christian men, and landowners, though not rich, towards the end of the century. All of these, leading a quiet and stationary life among their own kin, were in a better position to take care of her, had she been their mother, than John could have been.

these limits her history is clear, and her character stands out in singular perfection of womanly dignity and beauty. But all before, and all after, Inspiration has left in doubt. With a sacred reserve in which one can hardly fail to see a lesson, only that short segment of her existence is made visible to posterity, in which she vouches, as it were, for the real and perfect Humanity of her blessed and only Son.

Reserve of Scripture.

Tradition, or, as seems more probable, heretical invention,[5] endeavored in later times to fill this blank. Joachim and Anna, a blameless pair, were both well stricken in years, and unblest with offspring; for which, however, they continued to pray without ceasing. The latter, on one occasion, in the fervor of her petitions, dared to go within the Holy of Holies, which the high-priest alone is allowed to enter. There her prayer was granted; and an Angel, at the same moment, announced the good news to Joachim, then far away in the desert. To this some heretics added, that the birth of the Virgin was as immaculate and miraculous as her conception had been. It was more generally believed, on similar authority, that she lived secluded in the Temple from her third to her fourteenth year, and devoted herself to a life of voluntary virginity. In the same way, while some have supposed, on the authority of a passage of doubtful meaning in the Acts of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, that she died and was buried in that city, others have preferred the later legend, that she came to her end in Jerusalem, and after three, or, as some will have it, forty days,

Legends and traditions.

[5] These stories were of Gnostic or Ebionite invention; many of the early sects pretending to a secret tradition unknown to the Catholic Church.

rose from the dead, and was *assumed*, soul and body, into heaven. But all these notions, and innumerable others of the same kind, are without the least show of historic foundation. They first saw the light in times long after the age of the Apostles; and it is universally acknowledged,[6] that the writings in which they first appear, are "utterly apocryphal and full of fables."

Other holy women.

The same is to be said of the stories concerning Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and other faithful women who ministered to our Lord. Of the Prophetesses, Deaconesses, Widows, and other devout handmaidens of the Lord mentioned in the Acts and the Epistles, the traditions are equally vague and unsatisfactory. If the legends connected with them have any value, it is merely that, as a dark and confused back-ground, they bring into clearer light the dignity and simplicity of the Gospel Narratives.

SS. Thecla and Domitilla.

To the honored names recorded by Inspiration, Tradition has added a few, such as that of S. Thecla, the first female martyr; and that of Domitilla, a niece of the Emperor Domitian, and wife of Flavius Clemens his cousin, who, with a great number of others, was put to death for *Atheism and Jewish manners;* in other words, for the profession of Christianity.[7] Domitilla suffered exile for the Faith. S. Thecla, a maiden of Iconium, converted by S. Paul on his first visit to that region, devoted herself,

[6] See Tillemont, Baronius, the Bollandists, *et al.* The caution with which Roman Catholic writers endeavor to sustain the credit of the tissue of wonders connected with the name of S. Mary, while demolishing the credit of the earliest witnesses to those wonders, is most remarkable. Tillemont's notes are particularly instructive. *Memoires pour Servir à l'Hist. Eccles.*, tom. i.

[7] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc., vol. i. ch. xvi

it is said, to a life of virginity; left a luxurious home, breaking off her engagement to a noble youth; accompanied S. Paul in his travels; performed many wonders; and, after a miraculous deliverance from the beasts of the Roman Amphitheatre, seems to have died in peace. Her name, widely celebrated in the early Church, heads a long list of highly intellectual as well as holy women, to whom Christianity and virginity were pledges of a freedom,[8] which in heathen society was more or less denied them. Her acts, however, first written by a Presbyter of Asia Minor, whom S. John deposed on account of the many falsehoods contained in his book,[9] are manifestly entitled to little or no credit.

Virgins.

CHAPTER XI.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

That all powers necessary for the establishment and subsequent government of the Church were committed in the first place to the Eleven, and afterwards to those, who either by election or by an immediate divine call were added to their number, there can be no reasonable question. These all were Apostles, or Legates of Him, who is "the Apostle of our profession," the One *sent forth* by the Father,

All powers given to Apostles

[8] The preference given to virginity in the early Church tended to elevate woman in the social scale. She could marry, or not, of her own free choice. She was no longer an article to be disposed of, sometimes in infancy or childhood, by guardians or parents. It is remarkable how many of the female martyrs were virgins, who had refused to marry heathen husbands, to whom they had been thus betrothed.

[9] Tert. *de Bap.* 17: Hier. *de Ver. ill.* 7. It is S. Jerome only who mentions the name of S. John.

by the Apostle, and High-priest.

to be Prophet, Priest, and King. But the mission He had received from the Father, He gave in its fulness to them. The Apostles, therefore, were the ecumenical, catholic, perpetual Ministry. Collectively, they attended to matters of general concernment: individually, each had a charge, or field, the limits of which would be determined by mutual consent,[1] or on general principles of equity and convenience. In their relations to one another, they were "brothers," colleagues, peers. They called no man "father" on earth. According to the type of the old Theocracy, a "kingdom" was given to them; but the Head was to be invisible till the time of the final "appearing and kingdom" of Jesus Christ.

Brothers, colleagues, peers.

The abiding order.

Such was the ministry, as called, and trained, and commissioned by our Lord himself. That it was to be the abiding Order, is seen, not only in the promise of perpetuity contained in the words, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," but also in the fact, that the term "Apostolic" has continued in all times and places, to be one of the four "notes," or definitions, of the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."[2]

[1] Gal. ii. 9; Rom. xv. 16.

[2] Among modern German writers on this subject, *Mosheim* acknowledges the early rise of Episcopacy, and is almost disposed to grant that James was Bishop of Jerusalem. He confounds Bishops, however, with *Diocesans* or *See-bishops;* forgetting that Bishops at large, missionary Bishops, etc., have existed in all ages. *Dr. Schaff* is entangled in the same error, and while he professes to give the arguments *pro* and *con*, he misstates the argument *for* Episcopacy, and so neutralizes its force. *Neander* denies altogether the existence of a *clerus*, or clerical order in the Apostolic Church. *Dr. Hase* starts from the point, that "the twelve apostles at first regarded themselves as a perfected or exclusive college for the establishment of Christianity in the world;" but, in referring to the establishment they made in Jerusalem, omits all mention of James. In this way, he staves off Episcopacy till the times of S. Igna-

Apostolic Aids or Fellows.

By calling the seventy to the same ministry with the twelve, though in a secondary capacity, our Lord established a seminary, as it were, for a second and larger growth of Apostolic leaders.[3] The name *Disciples* given to them implies, that, while fulfilling a temporary mission as "prophets of the kingdom," they were in training and expectation of a more enduring office. Accordingly, from their ranks Matthias was elected to the vacant bishopric of

tius, and accounts for it (as some rationalists account for the existence of the world) "by the concurrent power of circumstances." *Gieseler* very fully grants the early establishment of Episcopacy in Jerusalem, in the person of James. *Thiersch* (the Irvingite) treats the subject as many Anglicans have done, except that on a very fine point (the position of S. John relatively to the seven angels) he builds up a theory of an Episcopacy of three orders, viz., Apostles, Angels, Bishops. *Rothe* makes Episcopacy to have been established by the Apostles in council, at the election of Symeon (Euseb. iii. 11). Other Germans have adopted different shades or mixtures of these various views. Among Anglican writers, I may mention Bilson's *Perpetual Divine Government* as a work less read than it deserves: also, among American authors, Onderdonk *on Episcopacy*, Mines' *Presbyterian*, etc., Wilson, *Church Identified*. In the following chapter I have given (perhaps) more weight to the *collegiate principle* than is commonly conceded to it.

[3] Dr. Schaff sees in the calling of the Seventy a reference to the Gentiles; but arbitrarily distinguishes the secondary Apostles as *Evangelists*. Of the eight, whom he so designates, not one is so called in the New Testament; while the term *apostles* (translated "messengers," Phil. ii. 25; 2 Cor. viii. 23,) *of the Churches* is applied to many of S. Paul's companions. Timothy, in one place (2 Tim. iv. 5), is exhorted to do the work of an Evangelist. But this does not prove him to have been an Evangelist *only*, any more than Acts, xiii. 1, would prove Paul or Barnabas to have been "prophets" only. Dr. Schaff mentions Mark and Luke among his Evangelists—because, I suppose, they are commonly so called. But, on the same principle, he might have included Matthew and John. The truth is, the term Evangelist means simply one who had an extraordinary "gift" for preaching the Gospel, and in that sense S. Paul was the chief of Evangelists—but none the less, however, an Apostle in the full sense of the word. I may here remark, that in the 13th canon of Neo-Cæsarea (A. D. 315) the Village Bishops are said to be "in imitation of the LXX," and therefore "fellow-officers in the same service" with the City Bishops.

Judas. Barnabas, also, was probably one of these. So, likewise, S. Luke, and many others afterwards called Apostles. In imitation of this system of a secondary Apostolate, we find in after times, that each of the chief Apostles was accompanied in his labors by a chosen company of sons, disciples, brothers, colleagues, yoke-fellows, sometimes called Apostles or Messengers of the Churches, who held to their principals some such relation as Joshua to Moses, as Elisha to Elijah, as the sons of the prophets to the prophets, or as the twelve more recently had held to our Lord Himself. Being endowed with special gifts,—"apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers,"—being designated in some cases by "prophecies going before," being employed in the larger fields of labor as Apostles of the Churches, being personally acquainted, moreover, with the Apostles' "doctrine, purpose, and manner of life," they were in some sense their disciples, or sons, but in another sense their aids, or fellow-laborers. Thus, Timothy was more than once clothed with the full authority of S. Paul. His name, like that of Titus, Sosthenes, and Silvanus,[4] is associated with S. Paul's in the superscription of Epistles. All that they lacked, during the lifetime of S. Paul, was a field of primary or separate jurisdiction. But, in serving thus in a secondary position, they simply followed the example of their leader. For, it is to be observed, that during his ministry in Antioch, Saul himself was reckoned last among a company of "prophets," of which Barnabas was first. So, in the first missionary journey he was second to Barnabas. It was

Second growth of the Apostolate.

[4] 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 and 2 Thessal. i. 1.

twelve years, or more, after his first calling by our Lord that he assumed a primary position as an Apostolic leader.[5]

One College at first, then many.

Such, then, was the catholic, or ecumenical ministry of the Church: at first, one Apostolic company of Twelve, resident in Jerusalem; afterwards, when the door to the Gentiles had been opened, numerous companies or colleges of the same kind, acting dispersedly but harmoniously in all quarters of the world. The *collegiate principle*, which is manifest in all this, was never abandoned in the Church. Even when each great city came to have its own bishop, the principle was retained in that ancient canon which required two or three prelates to concur in episcopal ordinations; and still more fully, in the custom of annual or semi-annual Synods. Wherever truth was to be proclaimed with fulness of authority, as against some heresy, for example, the "great company of preachers" was obliged to come together.

The principle fixed.

LOCAL MINISTRY: Presbyters, Deacons, with a Chief-Pastor, or Bishop.

The sojourn of the Twelve in Jerusalem, the only Church founded by the original Apostolic College, enabled them to establish in that great centre the first pattern and example of a local Church.[6] There were Presbyters, or Elders, who, being sometimes called Bishops, or Overseers, may, for the sake of clearness, be distinguished as *Presbyter-Bishops*. To them were added the Seven, afterwards called *Deacons*. Finally, the work of organizing the mother

[5] Acts, xiii. 1, 2; xiv. 14; xv. 12, 25.

[6] "The new Churches out of Palestine formed themselves after the pattern of the mother Church in Jerusalem .... James ... *stood* in Jerusalem, where he continued to reside, *at the head of the Church*, in equal esteem with the Apostles ... *quite in the relation of a later bishop*, but without the appellation." Gies. *Ecc. Hist.*, § 30. (Smith's Am. Ed.)

Church at Jerusalem being duly accomplished, James, an Apostle, and probably one of the original Twelve, was put in special charge of that important See; and the other Apostles, leaving its government to him, separated, and departed on their respective missions.

James an Apostle-Bishop.

From that time forth, James stands before us in a twofold relation. He is an Apostle, reckoned first among the three main "pillars" of the universal Church. He is a local Chief-pastor, Bishop, or Overseer. We may call him, therefore, by way of distinction, the *Apostle-Bishop* of the See of Jerusalem.[7]

The same system elsewhere.

Now, what the Apostles did collectively with regard to the mother See, they afterwards did severally, though from the difference of circumstances somewhat more slowly, with regard to other Churches in the limits of their respective missions. Wherever a Church was founded, Presbyters or Bishops[8] were ordained. To them a certain oversight, subject to that of the Apostolic founder, was duly committed. They could preach, teach, minister in things sacred, and act in matters of discipline and doctrine as a kind of local council, senate, or sanhedrim. Deacons were in like manner appointed, with a special view to the administration of the charities of the Church. The proper sphere of woman, as a help-meet for man, in the higher as well as lower cares of life, was acknowledged in the assignment of certain charitable offices to Deaconesses and Widows,[9] the

Deaconesses. Widows.

[7] Gal. i. 19; ii. 12; Acts, xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18.

[8] I *assume* the identity of meaning of these two names in the New Testament, though there is high authority among sound critics for making a distinction. Those who make the distinction can put the origin of city Sees and resident Bishops a little earlier than it is put in this chapter.

[9] 1 Tim. v. 9; Tit. ii. 3; Phil. iv. 3.

same, perhaps, that are sometimes called *elder women*, or Presbyteresses. The Churches, thus organized by each particular Apostle, continued to be the objects of his paternal care; were visited by him, or by some one of his company, at certain intervals; and, on the natural and equitable principle of each limiting his supervision to the line of his own labors, constituted his field or jurisdiction.[10] Thus S. Paul was Apostle-Bishop of Ephesus, Corinth, and many other places. The assignment of one resident head to each city Church was naturally reserved, until the number of Christians in each place, and the number of persons duly qualified and trained as "Apostles of Churches,"[11] rendered such an arrangement desirable and practicable. Elder Women.

This simple order, by which the government of each local Church was so admirably knit to that of the Church at large, was every where quickened, as it were, by the *charismata*, largesses, or special "gifts," which followed the triumphant Ascension of our Lord to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High. Such "gifts" were needed as a "sign." In the lack of a sufficient number of persons duly educated for the office, they fitted a great mass of believers for some useful part in "the work of the Ministry," and were among the chief instruments of the supernatural growth of the Church. Charisms, or Gifts.

Among these, the "gift" to be *Apostles* naturally held the first place. Close akin to this were the special endowments, which distinguished the fit persons for *Prophets*, *Evangelists*, *Pastors*, *Teachers*. Those who exhibited signs of the possession of these Their Order.

[10] 1 Cor. iv. 14–21; 2 Cor. x. 15, 16.

[11] 2 Cor. viii. 23.

higher gifts seem generally to have been enrolled in the companies of the Apostles. Last of all were a crowd of inferior talents, *miracles*, *healings*, *helps*, *governments*, *diversities of tongues*, and the like, which continued so short a time, that the very meaning of the names is only matter of conjecture.

Their Purpose.

This wonderful profusion of extraordinary gifts for the Ministry is no essential part of the Ministry itself. It was simply a gracious provision for a single and peculiar crisis. It belonged to the sowing, or planting season. It was that flowering, or blossoming of the Tree of Life, which partly anticipated, and partly developed the fruits of ordinary intellectual and spiritual culture. Like the parallel phenomenon of the Old Testament[12]—the outbreak, namely, of the spirit of prophecy in the Camp, while the order of the Tabernacle was being established—it opened the way, and gave a Divine sanction, or sign, to the necessary division and distribution of ministerial functions.[13] As S. Paul declares: The gifts were given, "in order to fit believers for ministerial work"—to fit them "for the edification," or building up "of the Body of Christ."[14] When this miraculous fitting of men for the Ministry had been

Type.

[12] Numbers, xi. 24–30.

[13] If any notions of *parity* existed among the early Christians, nothing could more effectually have rebuked such notions, and prepared men's minds for a system of subordinated grades in the Ministry, than the *measure* in which the gifts were given. See Rom. xii. 3.

[14] Ephesians, iv. 12–16; in which passage S. Paul declares (1) the *occasion* of these gifts, viz., the Ascension in triumph; (2) their *nature*, viz., *to be Apostles, Prophets*, etc., etc.; (3) their *object*, viz., πρὸς καταρτισμὸν—"for fitting," adapting, perfecting—"the saints," εἰς—"into ministerial work," etc.; (4) their *duration*, viz., *till* the Church, having passed its *infant* state, arrives at the well-compacted proportions of a mature and settled manhood, i. e., till it should be strong enough to be left to the laws of ordinary and historic growth.

sufficiently accomplished; when, according to what seems to be the drift of the lively mixed metaphors of the Apostle, the Church had weathered the comparatively unsettled, and critical time of its infancy, and was hardening into the definite proportions of maturer manhood; when, in short, its organic connection with Christ, the Head, had been compacted by the development of all the joints and bands of a harmonious system of order: then, *prophecies* began to fail; then, *tongues* began to cease; then, miraculous *knowledge* vanished away; then, the gifts, in short, and the beautiful and marvellous ministration of gifts, were quietly withdrawn from the sphere of human experience; and ordinary gifts, or talents, took their place.

Difference between temporary and permanent mission.

And this is confirmed by observing the difference made by our Lord between that *preparatory* and *extraordinary commission* given to the Twelve and the Seventy when they were sent forth two by two as Prophets of the Kingdom, and that *perpetual charge* laid upon the Twelve when they were sent forth with full powers to preach the Gospel. In the former commission He says: "Preach the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." The power to do wonders is an essential part of their mission. But in the latter commission He says: "Go ye out into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, baptize, teach all things that I have commanded; and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." No extraordinary power is embodied in their commission. For, though miraculous gifts are afterwards alluded to, it is not in connection with the Ministry, but with

the Church in general. "These signs shall follow them that believe." From all which it is evident that while the gifts fitted men to be *able* Ministers of God, and sometimes designated the persons who should be admitted into the Ministry, they were no essential feature of the Ministry itself.

POWER COMMUNICATED.

In the exercise of their office as chief rulers of the Church, the Apostles did not hesitate to assert their authority when necessary, but at the same time avoided all appearance of despotic or monocratic rule. They communicated to the Presbyters every priestly power[15] of the ministry, and a share of every governing or kingly power. The particular function which they reserved absolutely to themselves was that of *ordination;* and even in this the Presbyters took part, when the person ordained was to be admitted into their own order. The "laying on of hands" for confirmation seems also to have been reserved to the highest order, at least during the Apostolic age.[16] In accordance with this fraternal communication of ministerial powers, the Presbyters, and Brethren generally, were taken into council with the Apostles, even in matters which the latter were perfectly competent to determine by themselves. In the same spirit S. Peter, in addressing the Presbyters, could speak of himself as their *sympresbyteros*, fellow-presbyter; the powers of the ministry being, in fact, so distributed, that no name can be given to any one order, which is not in some sense applicable to the others also. The earliest image, therefore, of the relation of the Presbytery of

Relation of the Orders to one another.

[15] It is in priestly power, *sacerdotio,* that S. Jerome affirms the equality of Presbyters, Bishops, and Apostles: *Ep. ad Evangelum.*

[16] Bingham's *Antiquities,* B. ii. ch. xix.

each local Church to the Chief Pastor, was that which represented the Bishop as in the place of Christ,[17] and the Presbyters as in the place of His "friends" and "brethren," the Twelve: an idea beautifully carried out in the most primitive arrangement of Churches; namely, that of thirteen thrones, the middle one of which was occupied by the Bishop, the others by the Presbyters. The Deacons, in like manner, were represented as "angels and prophets,"[18] bearing the *diaconia* of Jesus Christ: to wit, that out-going ministry, which our Lord exercised when He went about as a prophet, doing good. The three orders, in short, all participated in the threefold ministry; the main difference being, that in the first order the kingly idea was most prominent, in the second the priestly, and in the third the prophetic.

LAY INFLUENCE.

The People, also, were encouraged to take an active interest in Church affairs. The essential

[17] S. Ignatius (ad *Magnes.* 6,) represents the three orders respectively as in the place of *God*, of the *Apostles*, of *Jesus Christ*. The context, however, seems to show that by the first of these expressions he means *Christ* as the Divine Head; and by the third, Christ in His *earthly* ministry. It has been well observed by Pearson, Bingham, and others, that S. Ignatius exalts the Presbyters as earnestly as he does the Bishop. The same may be said of his way of speaking of that order, "the dearest" to him, the Deacons. The idea of co-ordination was more prominent to his mind than that of subordination—though the latter was not lost sight of. "My life for him that is subject to the Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons—God's stewards, assessors, and ministers." See Bingham, ii. xix. 6–8; ii. xx. 18.

[18] So called in Apostol. Constitut. ii. 30. I may observe, in passing, that Deacons in modern times being *young men* with little practical experience, and their office being regarded as a mere stepping-stone to a higher order, we have but a shadow of that diaconate which was held by such men as Stephen, Philip, Laurentius, Athanasius, and others, in ancient times. The custom of having only *seven* Deacons to a city, however large, (Canon 14, Neo-Cæsarea,) helped to give dignity to the diaconal office.

kingly priesthood of the mass of believers was as carefully inculcated upon the Christian, as it had previously been upon the Israelite Church.[19] The doctrine was carried out, moreover, into discipline and worship. As already mentioned, the Brethren were present at Apostolic councils; and decrees went forth in their name, as well as in that of the Apostles and Elders. In the choice of the seven Deacons, and possibly in that of Matthias, the precedent of election was established; so that the Church no sooner became settled, than popular suffrage concurred with ordination in the appointment of Bishops and other Church officers. In contributing to the common cause the brethren were left free to tax themselves; in all acts of common worship they had an important part assigned them;[20] and even in the administration of discipline, that eminently Apostolic office of binding and loosing, their coöperation was earnestly desired and thankfully acknowledged.[21]

Election of the Clergy.

But in proportion as power thus descended and became distributed, as it were, among all the members of the Body of Christ, there was the greater need that the Bishopric,[22] that is, the supreme oversight and superintendence, should be exerted in a way to give it an effectual and decisive weight.

Need of the Episcopate.

[19] 1 Pet. ii. 5; Exod. xix. 6.

[20] The *Liturgies*, as is well known, abound with such mutual *benedictions*, etc., as "The Lord be with you: And with thy Spirit." For this reason, among many others, a Liturgy "understanded of the people" is highly important. Where the laity are deprived of their just part in public worship, they lose with it many other rights.

[21] In this paragraph I refer chiefly to Acts, i. 26; vi. 5; xv. 23; 1 Cor. xiv. 16; 2 Cor. ix. 6–7; 1 Cor. v. 3–5; 2 Cor. ii. 5–10: passages which are confirmed in the interpretation I have given them by the uniform practice of the Church in the second and third centuries.

[22] Acts, i. 20. See Chapin's View ... of the *Prim. Ch.* ch. xv.

Oversight how exercised.

The Apostles exercised it in a way that showed their sense of its importance. They fixed their residence, as far as possible, in the great world-centres. Thus, from the central point of Ephesus, S. Paul, for three years, supervised the Church work going on throughout the whole Province of Asia. They made regular visitations, as frequent and as long as circumstances would permit, to the several Churches of their planting. In such visitations, the Presbyter-bishops were assembled, exhorted, admonished; discipline was administered when need so required; ministers were ordained, faith confirmed, and gifts bestowed by the laying on of hands. Questions of order, too hard for the local authorities, were then definitely settled. In this way, unity and uniformity were sufficiently secured. What Apostles ordained in one place, they had power and opportunity, if they deemed it advisable, to ordain in all.[23]

Legates of the Apostles.

And when, from the continuous enlargement of their respective fields of labor, the Apostles saw less than was desirable of the Churches under their charge, they exercised their oversight by written Epistles, or by sending one or other of their Colleagues or Companions, as Angels, Messengers, or Apostles for the nonce. Persons thus sent were clothed with full authority, and it was required that they should be received and treated as the elder Apostles themselves.[24]

Their Successors.

Finally, towards the end of their career, when the elder Apostles knew that the time of their departure was at hand, they in no case left their peculiar powers

[23] Acts, xv. 36; xiv. 21–23; xviii. 23; xx. 17–35; 2 Cor. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. xi. 34; xvi. 1, 2.

[24] Acts, xix. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 18; viii. 23; 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

to the Presbyter-bishops, or to the local congregations;[25] but, according to the uniform testimony of the early Church, assigned Timothy to Ephesus, though there was in that city a numerous band of Presbyter-bishops; Titus to Crete; Linus, Cletus, and Clemens to Rome; Symeon to Jerusalem, after the death of James; Euodius and Ignatius to Antioch; Polycarp to Smyrna; Annianus to Alexandria; and others of their companions to other places. They gave to these, moreover, all the supervisory powers of the Apostolic office. As we learn from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and from the Book of Revelation, they were to see to the selection of fit men for Presbyter-bishops and Deacons; to ordain such as were approved; to try such as were accused; to rebuke, exhort, admonish, with all authority; to expose the pretentions of false apostles; to exercise, in short, the same oversight and rule which the first generation of Church rulers had exercised before them.

Powers given to them.

[25] S. Jerome's declaration, in the Epistle *ad Evangelum* (and in *Comment.* on Tit. i. 7), that "after *contentions arose*, one saying, I am of Paul, another, I of Apollos, etc., *it was decreed through the whole world*, that one of the Presbyters should be elected and placed over the others, and to him the whole care of the Church should pertain, that the seeds of schism might be removed," puts the origin of See-Bishops rather earlier than I have done; for such "contentions arose" quite early in Apostolic times. This famous Epistle, so often quoted in part, ought to be read as a whole. It would then be seen, that S. Jerome's object is to show that a Presbyter is superior to a Deacon in *priesthood—sacerdotio esse majorem;* and that in respect of the same priesthood, *Presbyters, Bishops,* and *Apostles* are equal: a point universally conceded. This fact considered, his concluding words give the sum of his view of the ministry: "What Aaron, and his sons, and the Levites, were in the Temple, the same are Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Church." The case of the Church of Alexandria, mentioned by S. Jerome and Ambrosiaster, is somewhat peculiar; but I reserve the discussion of it for another place. See Book ii., ch. 10, of this History. See, also, Chapin, chap. xv.

In this way the Bishopric, or Apostolate, as commissioned by our Lord after the Resurrection, had its own seed within it, and was every where transmitted and acknowledged as the sole supreme governing and ordaining power. The only power not thus transmitted was that of working miracles. But that, as we have seen, was given before, not after the Resurrection; and belonged then, as at all other times, to the extraordinary "prophetic office:" namely, to that kind of preaching which prepares the way for a new system, or lays the foundations. The Episcopate self-perpetuating.

About the time that this beginning of a succession was made among the Gentile Churches, S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, died, and Symeon, a cousin of our Lord, was elected in his place. In the generation that immediately followed, there is one inspired witness of the order then existing, and two uninspired. Three witnesses.

S. John, addressing the mystical Seven Churches of Asia, exhorts or reproves their respective Angels, a term etymologically equivalent to the word Apostles, and, as used by the writer of the Apocalypse, implying the same as Bishops in the modern sense. A question arises, however, whether the severe rebukes which prove these Angels to have been responsible heads of the seven Churches do not also prove them to have been subordinate to the Apostle S. John.[26] To this the obvious answer is that S. John merely writes "what the Spirit saith," in the character of a Prophet or Divine. In other S. John the first witness.

[26] Thiersch, the Irvingite historian, uses this supposed fact to prove the existence of his threefold Episcopate, Apostles, Angels, Bishops. If the fact were as he supposes, it would not prove the three distinct orders of the Episcopate; it would merely point to a metropolitan system.

words, it is not John who calls the seven Angels to account; it is the Lord Himself.[27] There is nothing in the Apocalypse, therefore, to prove the existence of any office on earth, at that time, superior in order to that of the seven Angels. On the contrary, the fact that the Lord Himself addresses them, and not the Apostle, rather proves them to have been in a position of accountability to the Lord alone.

S. Clement the second witness.

The second witness of this period, S. Clement of Rome, by referring to the sacerdotal analogy of High-Priests, Priests, and Levites, or to the military analogy of Prefects, Chiliarchs, Centurions and other officers, shows incidentally, and therefore the more powerfully, that the principle of subordination, or prelacy, was acknowledged in the Ministry. In the same incidental way he mentions Rulers and Presbyters in one place, Bishops and Deacons in another.[28]

Priestly analogy. Military.

Order divinely settled.

He testifies also that *the order of succession was settled by Divine Providence and by Apostolic authority*.[29] "The Apostles knew from our Lord Jesus Christ that contention would arise about the name of the Bishopric; for which reason, being possessed of perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the said (Bishops and Deacons), and gave order for the future, how, when these fell asleep, other approved men might be set in their place." This, he adds, was settled with the consent of the whole Church. It is plain, therefore, that the provision against schism, which some have represented as made by Presbyters after the Apostolic age, was made in

[27] Rev. i. 11.

[28] S. Clem. Ep. Cap. i. xlii. xliv.

[29] I quote S. Clement only for *this point*, because the sentence, in relation to other points, is somewhat confused.

reality by the Apostles, under divine inspiration, and was received universally.

S. Ignatius of Antioch, whose ministerial life had been for thirty years contemporaneous with that of S. John, is still more positive in his testimony. That "the Episcopate is represented by him as the divinely appointed pillar which sustains the whole ecclesiastical fabric,"[30] is now universally conceded by intelligent historians. It is therefore hardly necessary to cite his words: it is enough to remark, that his witness, on this subject, is unaffected by the controversy with regard to the genuineness of certain portions of his remaining Epistles.[31]

S. Ignatius the third witness.

A question still remains, as to how far the Episcopate, thus settled, assumed in Apostolic times that metropolitan form which it afterwards bore, and to which in all ages it naturally, and perhaps logically, tends.[32]

Metropolitan system.

[30] Dr. Hase, *Hist. of Christian Church*, § 59. This writer adds, and Dr. Schaff follows him in the assertion, that the Episcopate "*much needed his earnest commendations*;" namely, that it was a *novelty*, and therefore needed defence. If earnest commendation of a thing is proof of its novelty, we shall have to regard the very Faith itself as a novelty; for there is not a writer, from S. Paul down, who does not earnestly commend it.

[31] Dr. Hase, § 73, fully admits this: see, also, Cureton, *Corpus Ignatianum;* and Schaff, *Hist.*, &c.

[32] Dr. Schaff urges, that the logical tendency of Episcopacy is to absolute centralization, i. e., *Popery*. So would I say, if this centralizing tendency had not been controlled by our Lord himself in the appointment of twelve *brethren*, who were to call no man *father*, i. e., pope, upon earth, but were to hold to their Head in Heaven. In other words, every thing in the Church *tends* to a centre, or point; the only question is, *where* that centre is to be found. Some say in Rome. We say in Heaven. Some make "the kingdom" perfect here on earth. We regard it as imperfect here, and therefore *wait* for "His appearing and Kingdom." To this I might add, that those, who represent the original government of the Church as Presbyterian, yet acknowledge that it *changed* into Episcopal in one or two generations. How can they escape the inference, that Presbyterianism *logically tends* to Episcopacy?

Mother cities.

It is certain, that among the ancients the mother city was not only a centre of social and political influence, but an object of those loyal, reverential, affectionate feelings, which in modern times we associate rather with the word fatherland, or mother country. By devoting so much of their time as they did to these great centres, the Apostles availed themselves of this state of things, and, it may be said, gave their countenance to it. They made the centres of religious influence coincident with those of social or political power. It was natural, therefore, that whatever equality might exist among Bishops, Angels, or Apostles, as such, considerable inequalities should arise as to the influence and weight of their respective Sees.

Precedence of Jerusalem

Thus James, one of the last and least of the Apostles, came to have a certain precedence over Peter and John.[33] Doubtless, it was because he was the head of the Mother Church. In after times Jerusalem which had been first, came to be last, in point of influence among the chief Churches. As soon as this was the case, the Bishop of Jerusalem ranked accordingly.

Two-fold character of Bishops.

The metropolitan system, therefore, and in fact the whole system of precedence that obtained in the early Church, was a natural development from the two-fold representative character of Bishops. As representatives of Christ, the Head, all Bishops were

[33] This appears in the Council, Acts xv. The placing of his name before those of Cephas and John, Gal. ii. 9, is an argument of a certain precedence; though I do not think it amounts to any thing more than an acknowledgment of the importance of the Church which he represented. The same is to be said of the prayer *pro fidelibus* in the Ap. Constitutions, where the Bishop of Jerusalem is prayed for *before* him of Rome and Antioch.

"brethren," "colleagues," peers. As representatives of particular Churches, or cities, they could allow certain distinctions of honor or of power to grow up among them. Differences of this kind developed, and were more clearly systematized and defined, as the way was gradually opened for provincial or general Councils.

Rule of precedence.

It was, in fact, one form in which *the lay element*, as it has been sometimes called,—the influence of numbers, masses, position, and other things that have weight in secular affairs,—gradually made itself to be felt in the government of the Church. Hence the rule of precedence that prevailed, and which was firmly maintained by the six ecumenical Councils, was, that Bishops should rank according to the importance of their Sees. Rome, indeed, contended for a different rule. Foundation by S. Peter presented, in her judgment, a superior claim. But in spite of her efforts, ecclesiastical precedence followed the changes of political, and instead of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, the order of the Churches came in time to be—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and, last of all, Jerusalem.

How determined.

All this, however, belongs to later history. In Apostolic times the question of precedence was little thought of; and, so far as it was considered, it seems to have been determined by the rules of equity and common sense.

CHAPTER XII.

DOCTRINE AND HERESIES.

THE GOSPEL.

WHEN the Disciples were sent two by two before the face of the Lord, as prophets of the Kingdom, their prophesying was summed up in the one pregnant phrase, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In the same way, when the Apostles went forth, their evangel, gospel, god-spell, or good news, was the announcement and explication of the simple historic fact, that the Head of that promised Kingdom had truly come and done the work which the Prophets of the Old Testament had so long before predicted. More briefly stated: it was simply *God manifest in the Flesh.* This involved the verity, that He had been born, had lived, suffered, died, and especially had risen from the dead, and ascended up in triumph to the Right Hand of the Majesty on high. To witness to this truth was the office for which the Church had been created. To receive the same in its fulness; to embrace it with all the heart, all the soul, all the mind; to measure all other truth by it, making it the "analogy," or "rule of faith;" to discern it in its moral, and intellectual, as well as spiritual bearings;[1] in short, to admit it wholly, in all its consequences, as a living principle pervading the whole

CHRIST COME IN THE FLESH.

[1] Examples of this measuring of all truth and duty by "the Gospel," are Rom. vi. 1–14; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 3, 11, 12, etc.; Ephes. v. 22–33; Coloss. ii. 12; iii. 1–5; 1 Pet. iv. 1; 1 John, iv. 2.

life, was to be the substance of right faith, and the sum of sound doctrine to the end of time.

Three drifts of Heresy.

But nature is always partial or one-sided in its apprehension of the Truth. Measuring every thing by a standard of human imperfection, it is naturally eclectic, choosing its own ground or point of view, and holding one half of a doctrine, to the denial, exclusion, or overlaying of other parts equally vital and essential. For, in the reception of any fact or doctrine, almost every thing depends upon the standing-point assumed. A man of transcendental turn, relying exclusively on his own spiritual intuitions, will despise the sensible evidences, the miracles, the sacraments, the scriptures, the external body of Religion. Such men fall into gnostic, mystic, transcendental, or spiritualist heresies. Another class of men believe in nought but rational induction, or logical demonstration. Like the Jews of old, they are always demanding "a sign." Such men are apt to become positivists, rationalists, their pravity taking sometimes a negative or skeptical, and sometimes, when the mind grows weary of denying, an arbitrarily positive form. But, to the great mass of men, Religion is a matter of feeling, or affection, rather than of speculative insight, or rational conviction; and this bias, taking sometimes an enthusiastic, sometimes an æsthetic, or sometimes a legal and moral turn, leads in its excess to a numerous class of sensuous heresies.

Spiritualist.

Rationalist.

Sensuous.

Divine standpoint.

Such being the well-known proclivities of the human heart, it pleased our Lord, in giving His Truth to men, to provide at the same time a divine standing-point from which the Truth was to be regarded. Those who believed were to be baptized.

As there was one Spirit, there was to be one Body. Those who held to the doctrine of the Apostles were to hold to their fellowship. The Church, in short, was appointed to be the pillar and ground of the Truth.

Necessary differences

But even in the best balanced minds, and from whatever ground or point of view, there will be more or less of a tendency to one or other of the extremes above mentioned. In this life we can know but in part; we can see but through a glass darkly. According, therefore, to the inherent peculiarities of each individual nature, there will be a disposition to look at Truth through the sensuous, the rational, or the transcendental glass, and thus to fall into partial or heretical opinions. This leaning, however, when guarded and controlled by mutual charity, and by a ground of unity sufficiently defined, is not only harmless, but wholesome; bringing out the one Truth in a greater variety of aspects, and making it intelligible to a greater variety of minds.

Three Leanings.

Types of Doctrine.

Of this wholesome development in particular directions, S. John, S. Paul, and S. Peter were the most prominent representatives in Apostolic times. S. John delighted to contemplate the absolute, simple Truth: the Truth as seen in itself, as seen in God. He was therefore the type of the theologian, or divine. S. Paul presented the Truth rather in its manifold relations to the waywardness and weakness of the human understanding.[2] He is the type of the

[2] On the subject of this paragraph the German critics have shown much solid, as well as brilliant ingenuity: some of them, such as Baur, with a view to magnify different ways of seeing, into differences of belief. To the student, who will take the pains to trace, not merely the different modes of thought or expression among the sacred writers, but their wonderful harmony, the study of this subject will be found well worthy of attention.

able reasoner, the versatile expounder, the ready controversialist, the profound and skilful teacher. S. Peter, endowed by nature with affections intensely human, found it more congenial to "taste the Lord as gracious," than to behold Him with eagle eye as the Light and Life. To S. John Christ was the incarnate "Word;" to S. Paul "the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession;" to S. Peter "the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls." S. John, from his high pitch of contemplation, addressed the body of believers as "little children;" S. Paul wrestled with them on more equal terms, as "men" and "brethren;" S. Peter singled out one class or another, as husbands, wives, masters, servants, elders, juniors, or when he addressed them as a mass, it was with the pastoral word "beloved." Without entering into all the distinctions of this kind, which have been pointed out by critics, and considerably exaggerated, it may be observed, in short, that while each of these great teachers presented the whole and living Truth, S. John dwells chiefly on the Incarnation as a mysterious whole, a "light" illumining all other lights; S. Paul on the Death and Resurrection, especially the latter, as the logical basis of all doctrine, all morals, and all "glory;" S. Peter on the living, toiling, suffering, bleeding, dying Christ, as the "precious" example, the precious ransom, the irresistible appeal to all noble, earnest, tender, and generous affections. To these S. James is sometimes added, as representing a fourth position. To judge from his Epistle, he is less a representative of doctrine than of that reactionary appeal to conscience and common sense, which becomes necessary when doctrinal discussion has gone too far; when ortho-

S. John. S. Paul. S. Peter. S. James.

doxy, in fact, is made a substitute for faith. To heated polemics, therefore, in times of dogmatic strife, this remarkable production has seemed a mere "epistle of straw."[3] In other times, and under other circumstances, amid the lip-worship and licentiousness of a self-seeking age, it comes up as a sharp point of that ancient rock of common truth underlying all religion, the Sermon on the Mount.

Harmony of the Apostles.

Differences of this kind may be allowed for, without imagining any thing analogous to separate schools or parties in the Apostolic Church. Pauline and Petrine factions may undoubtedly have existed; but the great teachers knew nothing of them, except to repudiate them. They understood themselves, and understood one another.

It may be observed, moreover, by way of counterpoise to the distinctions above mentioned, that each of the great Apostles glides occasionally, in his style, into the peculiarities of the others. S. John, for instance, dwells on the *sensible* manifestation of the Word of Life; S. Paul frequently pauses to admire "the mystery of godliness;" S. Peter speaks of "the word," that is, the truth, as the regenerating power. The same may be said of the differences of the four Gospels. While it is true that the Man and Prophet appears most prominently in S. Matthew, the King in S. Mark, the Priest in S. Luke, and the essential Deity in S. John,[4] yet there is no one of the four

Four Gospels.

[3] *Luther*, in his impatience, so characterized it: It was under other circumstances, that *Butler* and *Bull* drew from it appropriate lessons for the times. *Neander* is so unappreciative of this Epistle, that he arbitrarily supposes it to have been written before James was thoroughly acquainted with the Gospel.

[4] Hence, the application, to the four Evangelists, of the four faces respectively of the "living creatures" in the Apocalypse, the man, the lion, the ox, the eagle.

Evangelists in which all do not appear. There are distinctions, in short, but no antagonisms.

Scope of doctrinal history.

To this general account of the great types of doctrinal development,[5] it is necessary to add that the Apostles, like their Master, were seed-sowers of the Truth, not framers of systems. To give their teaching, therefore, in other language than their own, comes hardly within the legitimate province of the historian. The attempt has been made, indeed, by innumerable modern critics; and under the heads of the theology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology of the sacred writers, valuable contributions have been made to the cause of biblical interpretation. Yet none of these efforts represents, or in the nature of things can represent, more than the amount of truth seen from particular points of view.[6] As contributions to sacred criticism they all have their value. As accounts of what the Apostles taught, in determination of questions still *sub lite*, they are worse than useless; giving the garb of historic fact to things which, however excellent and ingenious, are nothing more or less than private and modern schemes of polemical divinity.

Proper range.

The History of Apostolic doctrine must confine itself to a somewhat narrower range. Not what sys-

[5] The word *development* has been much abused by Dr. Newman and others, in modern times; yet I know of no word to substitute for it in the history of doctrine. The term, in fact, is harmless, if we are careful not to confound development,—which is the opening, defining, and applying of truths contained in Holy Writ,—with corruptions and accretions derived from other sources.

[6] Neander is one of the largest-minded and most genial of historic critics of this kind; yet, in his "Planting of Christianity," S. Paul, S. John, S. Peter, and even our Lord Himself, are completely Neanderized. Thiersch, in the same way, has beautifully Irvingized the Doctrine of the Apostles; a thing which would be less objectionable if it were done in a professed "commentary," or in an Irvingite tract, and not under the garb of "history."

tems these first Teachers taught, but what materials, what conditions, what elements they left of systems afterwards drawn from them, or put upon them, is the utmost that can be attempted in a narrative of facts.

Four Heads.

And these elements may all be considered under four heads: 1. The Oral Teaching, or Tradition of the Apostles; 2. Their Creed, or Rule of Faith; 3. Their Inspired Writings; 4. The Heresies against which they contended, and which may have influenced more or less the form, style, manner, or particular topics of their teaching.

I. Oral Teaching.

The Apostles taught orally. Their doctrine, therefore, had to be treasured in the memories of believers. If we consider how vast the field was, and how many of the laborers in this field must have been, like Apollos, imperfectly instructed, it will not appear wonderful that a corrupt tradition spread almost as rapidly as the true; and that many things were attributed to Apostles for which they were not responsible. Thus, S. Paul had hardly left the Church of Thessalonica before he learned that his doctrine of Christ's coming had been misunderstood. In the same way, the traditions that flowed into the second century were very soon corrupted. They were almost invariably alleged in favor of doubtful facts, or heretical opinions. Papias, it is said, took great pains to collect the genuine sayings of our Lord. But few of these gleanings have remained in the literature of the Church;[7] and these few give little occasion to regret that the rest have perished.

Tradition soon corrupted.

Tradition in general.

Tradition, in the sense of the general spirit or drift of Apostolic teaching, or instructions embodied in

[7] See Routh, *Reliq. Sac.* vol. i.

particular observances, were of a more enduring character, and exerted, without doubt, a greater influence. Thus, the sacredness of the Lord's Day, the practice of infant baptism, the authority of the Old Testament, the use of Creeds, and other things of like character, might easily remain when mere words or phrases would be forgotten or perverted. The same might be said of every thing in which the second century was unanimous. The mind of an age, however, is so entirely assimilated by the age which follows, that, in general, tradition means little more than the prevailing sentiment of the day in which it is appealed to. We find, accordingly, that even in matters of practical observance, the Apostolic tradition came soon to be suspected, unless it were supported by Apostolic writings.[8]

II. THE CREED.

The first bulwark raised against the corruption of tradition was probably in the form of a brief Creed, or Rule of Faith.[9] Something of this sort is frequently alluded to in the New Testament, in such expressions as "the form of sound words," "the gospel," or evangel, "the faith once (for all) delivered to the Saints," or "the doctrine" into which they "were delivered;"[10] S. Paul, especially, not only referring to such a "gospel" once preached, but declaring it so unalterable that neither he nor

[8] S. Cyprian, in the question of re-baptizing heretics, would acknowledge no tradition but that which he found in Scripture.

[9] I use the phrase, as a convenient one, without any reference to controversies on the subject. In the common-sense use of words, any thing once fixed as a matter of belief becomes practically a rule of faith. The brief summary of the Gospel, therefore, which all believers received, would be in a peculiar, but not exclusive sense, *the* rule of faith. See Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doctrines*, § 20.

[10] Rom. vi. 17; literally, "the type of doctrine into which ye were delivered."

an angel from heaven could deviate from it. The natural outline of this summary would be suggested by the first formal act of faith. Every person admitted *in the Name of the Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, into the *Church Catholic*, by *Baptism*, *for the Remission of Sins*, with a view to the *Resurrection of the Dead and the Life everlasting*, would of course be required to say "credo" to all this; and that he might say it in good faith, would be instructed into its meaning. But those few words, briefly qualified or explained, make up the outline and the substance of the Creeds or Symbols of all ages. Such an outline, moreover, committed to memory by every believer, would be a "rule of faith;" that is, a touchstone of sound doctrine, alike available to learned and unlearned, to readers and simple hearers.

The baptismal Faith.

In the absence of any direct evidence to the contrary,[11] it seems most probable, that the filling up of this outline was not always in the same words; but that the forms of confession were marked from the beginning by the same diversity in language, with the same identity in substance, which we find among the symbols of a somewhat later period. By slight verbal variations shades of meaning might be expressed in one, which were not contained in others. Like the four Gospels, or the four ancient Liturgies, the creeds would thus be mutually completed, guarded, and explained.

Symbols numerous.

[11] Bp. Bull contends for *two* primitive Creeds—that of Jerusalem in the East, and that of the Apostles in the West. I can see no reason why there should not have been more. On the general subject see *History of Creeds*, by Rev. W. W. Harvey, M. A.; and Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, x. iii. 5.

III. SACRED WRITINGS.

But a safeguard would be needed against corruptions of the Creeds themselves; and still more against corruptions of the larger, more diffuse, and more minute instructions of the Lord, and of His Apostles. The four Gospels therefore were written; not early, nor all at once, but at certain intervals, under varied circumstances, by different writers, and yet with a harmony absolutely demonstrative of a divine authorship. Of these S. Matthew's was probably put forth before the Apostles left Jerusalem, and possibly in Hebrew, or Aramaic. S. Mark's, indited under the auspices of S. Peter, is of uncertain date. S. Luke's, and its continuation, the Acts of the Apostles, appear to have been written either during or shortly after the first imprisonment of S. Paul. The Gospel of S. John was stored up in the bosom of the beloved Disciple till near the close of the first century. We learn from S. Luke, that many had taken in hand to write narratives of this kind; so that a bulwark was needed against unreliable Scriptures, as well as against corrupted forms of oral tradition.[12]

Gospels. Acts.

Other Scriptures.

The Catholic Epistles seem all to have been the fruit of the later years of their respective writers. The Epistles of S. Paul were written to particular Churches, or persons, on particular emergencies; and may be dated from internal evidence with considerable precision.[13] The Apocalypse, which appeared about the year ninety-five, has been appro-

[12] The uninspired writings of this period are the first Epistle of S. Clement, and perhaps the second: possibly, also, the Epistle of S. Barnabas, and the Pastor of Hermas. The spurious writings, ascribed to this age, were composed in the second century, or later. For a list of them see Foulkes's *Manual of Ecclesiastical History*.

[13] See Chap. iv. of this Book.

priately placed at the close of the sacred series: its splendid and mystic imagery forming, as it were, the great Altar-window of the Temple of Inspiration.

Allegorical interpretation.

In addition to these sacred writings, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were earnestly commended to the first age of believers, as inspired, and profitable for doctrine; and in the interpretation of them, the "testimony of Jesus" was made the "spirit of prophecy." The consequence was, that "the rule of faith" became also the rule of interpretation. That analogical process, by which, in reading the Old Testament, we almost unconsciously transmute the letter into the spirit, seeing Christ everywhere, became the fixed habit of the Church mind; and occasionally degenerated into frivolous allegorizing.[14] The historical importance of this fact can hardly be overrated. For on the mode of interpretation favored by any age, its theological drift is in a great measure determined. It may be observed, that the Gnostics had little reverence for the Old Testament Scriptures; they used them largely, however, and applied both to them and to the writings of the New Testament, the allegorical method.[15] But their allegorizing was purely arbitrary; that of the Christians was kept within bounds by the dominant influence of "the analogy of the faith." In both cases it was application of the Scriptures rather than

The testimony of Jesus the spirit of prophecy.

[14] The Epistle to the Hebrews exhibits a severe moderation in the use of this method. The Epistle of Barnabas, which *may* belong, however, to the second century, indulges in it with the utmost freedom: so, also, the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The Epistle of S. Clement and the Epistles of S. Ignatius show less of it. S. Irenæus, and the Fathers after him, carry it occasionally to excess. Origen developed it into a more systematic shape.

[15] For ingenious specimens of this perversion, see *Simon Magus* in *Refutat. Omn. Hæresium*, S. Hippolyti, lib. vi.

strict interpretation. This is seen in the fact, that diverse applications of the same text, so long as they did not contradict the commonly received doctrines, were not regarded as contradicting one another.

IV. HERESIES.

In the Apostolic age, as in the Church since, the development, definition, or application of doctrine waited on opportunity, and had more or less of a defensive character against errors, or erroneous tendencies of the times. No heretics are mentioned by name in the New Testament, with the exception of the Nicolaitans; and, perhaps, Hymenæus and Alexander, whose "shipwreck of faith," however, may have been simple apostasy. The Diotrephes, censured by S. John in his second Epistle, was probably an ambitious Presbyter, or a tyrannizing Bishop. Heretical opinions are more frequently alluded to. But as they are not described, and are combated only in their elementary principles, it cannot be ascertained how far any of them had assumed a systematic shape.

GNOSIS.

Among the Greeks and philosophic Jews, there was an arrogant and pretentious speculative spirit, which judged all religions by its own instincts or intuitions, discerned some good in all, and was disposed to frame, out of materials drawn from all, a more scientific system. By the votaries of this *gnosis*, or "science falsely so called," the principle that *evil inheres in matter*[16] was an axiom universally admitted. They despised the physical world as the creation of some inferior and perhaps evil Power. The body they considered a mere encumbrance, instead of holding it in honor (as some-

EVIL IN MATTER.

[16] Opposed by such passages as 1 Tim. iv. 4.

The soul a captive.

thing pertaining) to the completeness of our humanity.[17] They regarded the soul as a sort of captive, and looked for its deliverance in the entire destruction of the body after death, and during life in complete abstraction from it. Hence great austerities among some. Hence an opinion among others, that the distinction of good and evil, so far as this world is concerned, is a mere *thesis*, or arbitrary appointment devised by evil Powers. Where such maxims prevailed, a denial of the *resurrection of the body*,[18] or an assertion of *a spiritual resurrection* only, would necessarily follow. The doctrine of *the Incarnation* would either be denied or subtly explained away. Among efforts of this kind the *docetic* theory, namely, Christ a pure spirit with a phantasmal or apparitional body, was one of the earliest and most popular. From numerous expressions in the New Testament it is highly probable, that the idea of a *pleroma*, or fulness of God's presence, from which all bodily existence is excluded;[19] of "endless genealogies," that is, processions or emanations of *œons*, *angels*, *principalities*, *powers*, a long chain of mediators between the world and God; and, in short, all the elementary notions which afterwards entered into the various Gnostic systems, were in vogue among the Greeks or Hellenizing Hebrews,

Docetæ.

[17] Such seems to me the meaning of the *original* in Col. ii. 23; the word translated "satisfaction" being equivalent to *completeness*, and that rendered "flesh" standing often (as in S. John, i. 14) for *man*.

[18] 1 Cor. xv. 12.

[19] To which S. Paul opposes the truth, that in Christ the fulness of the Godhead (pleroma) dwells *bodily*, Col. ii. 9. This chapter, the most suggestive on the subject, can hardly be understood without careful reference to the original. Other Anti-Gnostic passages are (perhaps) 1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 1–5; vi. 20; 1 John, i. 1–3; iv. 1–3; 2 Peter, ii; Jude. See Hammond on the New Test.

and were started into activity by the preaching of the Gospel.

Simon Magus.

To Simon Magus, a philosopher and wonder-worker of no ordinary powers, and to Samaria the home of mixed races and mixed creeds, tradition has assigned the earliest attempt at a definite Gnostic system. His views come down to us encumbered with the accretions of later times. "From *Sige*, Silence, the invisible, incomprehensible, eternal root of all things, sprang two mighty powers: the one above called *Nous*, the universal directing mind, which is of the male sex; the other below, a female, *Epinoia*, or intelligence, by which all things are generated."[20] From these two roots sprang four others, similarly, in pairs. The story that Simon identified Helen, his concubine, with Helen of Troy and other female firebrands of antiquity, and made her a sort of impersonation of that "lost sheep" wandering here below, *Epinoia* or intelligence, looks like a genuine tradition, and accords with the radically antinomian character of most of the early sects. To him the world was evil, society evil, marriage evil. The spirit, therefore, that rebels against law and order, was, from his point of view, the imprisoned divine spark struggling to be free. He availed himself largely of the language of the Old Testament, putting his own meaning upon it: and borrowed from Christianity some notions of redemption. He represented himself to be the great Power of God—the Father to Samaritans, the Son to Jews, the Holy Ghost to Gentiles—come into the world for the recovery of the "lost sheep."

Sige.

Nous.

Epinoia.

[20] Hippolytus quotes from Simon at some length; and his ac-

Dositheus, Menander.

Dositheus and Menander were likewise Samaritans, and endeavored in like manner to appropriate to themselves the character of redeemers. The Nicolaitanes,[21] referred to in the Apocalypse, were Gnostics only in the larger sense of the word; professing that kind of *gnosis*, or superior light, which makes all bodily acts indifferent, and regards all things as lawful. They were equally opposed to the moral and the ceremonial law.

Nicolaitans.

Historic importtance.

Heresies of this kind sprang from the indulgence of a profane speculative spirit. They are interesting as showing, that the advent of the Gospel did not find the world slumbering, but awake and completely armed, ready not only to contest every inch of ground, but to avail itself for this purpose of weapons drawn from the armory of Christianity itself.

Sensuous Heresies.

Towards *sensuous* or *carnal* errors, a class which tends less to contradict than to overlay and corrupt the faith, there was a most decided proclivity among the Corinthian Christians; showing itself in an overestimate of "gifts," in a tendency to man-worship, in party and sect spirit, in desire to "judge" and "reign," and in a disorderly state of things generally.[22] The love of novelty and excitement had much to do with this. Towards the end of the century it

Schism.

count of the heresy is probably the most accurate that has come down to us.

[21] They got their name, it is said, from Nicolaus, one of the seven Deacons; See Euseb. iii. 29. That the Antinomian spirit early availed itself of pretensions to knowledge, *gnosis*, which exempted its possessors from ordinary restraints, is obvious from the use of the word "knowledge" throughout the whole of 1 Cor. viii.

[22] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3. 4, 21; iv. 3, 8, 18; xi. 17–22; xiv. 26; *et passim:* the general effect of heresy of this sort seems to be intimated in 1 Cor. iii. 12–15; it does not *oppose* the fundamental faith, but overbuilds it with incongruous materials.

had grown to such an extent, that a large party in Corinth proposed to make the ministry not only an elective, but a rotatory office.[23] The same spirit showed itself elsewhere in fleshly notions of the millennium, and of the nearness of Christ's coming. It is remarkable, that, as the speculative religionists dignified their fancies with the high sounding name of *gnosis*, so the carnal Corinthians, in magnifying "gifts" and splitting up into parties, seem to have thought themselves preëminently "spiritual."[24]

Gifts over-valued.

The Judaizing spirit, in its proper and pure form, seems to have been of a rationalistic kind, springing from low and earthly views of the character of the Messiah.[25] In Pharisee and Sadducee alike, it was captious and full of doubts. It stumbled especially at the Divinity of Christ, and at the Catholicity of His mission. It was always demanding "signs," yet slow of heart to believe when signs were given. But the Pentecostal age was unfavorable to the development of a spirit of this kind; so that, beyond a stubborn prejudice against the mission of S. Paul, and a disposition to linger in the mere elements of Christianity, the Judaizing tendency was effectually kept down. The Sect in which it finally showed itself with least admixture of foreign elements, was the respectable but little known society of the Nazarenes. Acquiescence in the creed, a cordial recep-

Judaic Heresies.

Nazarenes

[23] Such seems to me the most rational account of that sedition in Corinth, against which S. Clement's letter was written. The Corinthians contended for the right to depose Presbyters without any crime proven against them.

[24] 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

[25] The real drift of the Judaic spirit is seen in such passages, as S. Luke, iv. 28; xxii. 70, 71; S. John, iii. 9; iv. 48; v. 18; vi. 52; viii. 58, 59; xix. 7; Acts, vii. 52; xi. 3; xiii. 45; xv. 1; xxii. 21, 22; Heb. iii. 3–6; v. 11–14, and vi. 1; Gal. ii. 13, 16; v. 1–6, etc., etc.

tion of the Sermon on the Mount, observance of the Law, adherence to the Gospel of S. Matthew to the exclusion of later Scriptures, and an undue elevation of morals above doctrine, seem to have been its pro-

Blind men minent characteristics. Of the three stages of light and knowledge described by Origen—namely, Jesus the son of David, Christ the incarnate Son, and the everlasting Word,—the Nazarenes preferred to linger in the first and lowest stage; "they were blind men, for ever crying, *Jesus, Son of David*, have mercy on me."

Cerinthus. As a general rule, the obstructive Judaizers either yielded to the demonstrations of power which accompanied the Gospel, or were drawn into a vortex of gnostic and sensuous speculations. Hence a form of *gnosis*, which was a medley of all notions. Cerinthus, as described by Epiphanius, is the type of this class. At first a ring-leader of the opponents of S. Paul, but disabled and not a little disgusted at the course of James and Peter in the Council at Jerusalem, he continued to maintain in part the inviolability of the Law, but engrafted upon it germs from the Samaritan philosophy. The world he represented as created and administered by lower

Christ an Æon. gods, or æons. The heavenly Christ, an æon of the highest order, descended upon the blameless Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, at his baptism in the Jordan, inhabited him through life, left him on the cross, but is to join him once more and reign upon the earth in the kingdom of the Millennium.[26] This prurient heresy, which Epiphanius compares to the two-headed hairy serpent Sepedon, and which could

[26] Euseb. iii. 28. Epiphan. *Hæres.* xxviii.

be sheep or goat at will, using the Old Testament against the New, or the New against the Old, spread like a plague in Asia Minor, and awakened the particular abhorrence of S. John.

Ebion. The Ebionites were probably Jewish Christians, so called from an affectation of poverty—the word Ebion meaning poor—or from a leader of that name: either theory being equally probable, and equally incapable of proof.[27] To their Judaizing they added the theory of Cerinthus. They are somewhat inconsistently described as very strict in morals, and decidedly antinomian; from which it may be inferred, that their name covered a considerable variety of sects.

Error combated in first principles. Thus the corruption of Judaism mingled with that of Heathenism, engendering monstrous dreams. The inspired wisdom of the Apostles dealt little with heresy as developed into systems. Writing for all time, they combated the evil in its elements, or first principles. For the learned curiosity, which delights to trace error through all its kaleidoscopic combinations, they had neither leisure nor inclination. In the provision, however, that they made against error, we see everywhere the proof of a forethought more than human. A rule of faith, brief, simple, comprehensive, stating facts rather than dogmas, and stamped on the heart and memory of each individual believer; a discipline and communion, the same

[27] The learned criticism that has demolished so many historical characters, merely because their names happened to be significant, has been itself demolished by the exquisite *jeu d'esprit* of Mr. Rogers, on the names of Newman, Wiseman, Wilde, Masterman; to which might be added Goode, Golightly, Horsman, and sundry others in the Tractarian and Papal Aggression controversies. See *Eclipse of Faith.*

Provision against error.

everywhere; and finally, a body of sacred writings, easily distinguished from all spurious and apocryphal productions, attested from without, and bearing their own witness in themselves, were precisely the things needed to separate Church doctrine from the chaos of loose opinions, with which it might otherwise have been hopelessly confounded. The times that followed the first century, amply demonstrated the wisdom of such threefold provision. As heresy organized, it was confronted by a mightier organization, prepared at every point to meet it. As it became more methodical, and more moral, imitating more closely the tenets and discipline of the Church, it was met by a harmony, and unity, beyond its imitation. The Church system, in short, was one that took in the whole man. It had a spirit and a body. It was equally adapted to heart, and mind, and soul. On whichever side, therefore, the flood of heresy might come in, there was a barrier provided.

Peculiarity of the Church.

In this respect, the Apostolic Church differs from all human schools. In it, more than in any rival system, order and liberty were able to stand together. It did not exclude a variety of standing-points: it simply harmonized them. Peter, in following Christ by a life of adventurous activity, might not be able to comprehend precisely what that other "man" was doing, who sat still and mused; he might find in "brother Paul" some things perplexing to him: but there was one fellowship, one faith, one baptism, one spirit, one body, one hope; and if there was any point in which oneness did not as yet appear, it was as easy to distrust one's self, as to distrust God's promise. Where there are different men, there are differences of perfection, differences of attainment.

Many standpoints harmonised.

The legitimate course, then, is "whereto we have attained, to walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing." In short, while unity of faith and practice was thoroughly provided for in the Apostolic system, it was not so provided as to exclude the necessity of charity, humility, and patience. To "speak the truth in love," or as the original seems to mean, to "win the truth by love," was to be the pervading principle of all genuine orthodoxy.

Truth in love.

CHAPTER XIII.

RITES—OBSERVANCES—MORALS.

In ritual little instruction needed.

Four thousand years of preparation for the Church, with the ritual education of the chosen people, left little need of instruction in the decencies of Religion. That men were to pray in reverent postures, that they were to fast at certain times, to celebrate festive occasions with suitable marks of joy, to assemble for common prayer—in short, to make worship a social, and therefore an orderly, uniform, and duly regulated thing—was sufficiently understood by Jew and Greek, by barbarian, Scythian, bond and free. Our Lord, therefore, in His teachings, confined Himself mainly to the meaning and spirit of such acts.[1] Leaving the Church to clothe herself, from the abundant material which ages of devotion had accumulated, in such garments of external sanctity as should be found most in keeping with her doctrine, He merely set

[1] Matt. vi. 1–18.

an example of preferring simple to complicated forms; of consecrating the obvious and catholic elements of nature, rather than symbols of a local, national, or purely conventional character.

Baptism. Baptism, that is, washing with water, a symbol of spiritual cleansing common to all religions, He substituted for Circumcision, as the rite of initiation, or new birth, into the Divine Name and Family. The addition of white robes, salt, lights, exorcism, renunciation, unction, crossing, and other graceful and significant though in the aggregate cumbrous forms, probably came in by degrees during the post-Apostolic period. As in the case of circumcision, the performance of this rite was not confined to the higher orders of the Ministry. It is possible that it was performed for the most part by immersion. Of this, however, there is no sufficient proof.

The Lord's Supper. The Breaking of Bread, in which bread and wine, the universal symbols of nourishment and refreshment, were consecrated as means of spiritual growth, was celebrated commonly on the first day of the week, and in strict conformity with the original Divine Institution. Apostles and Presbyters were ministers of this sacrament. The *Agape*, or Love-feast, was at first, perhaps, celebrated with it. As there was danger, however, of confusion arising from this practice, the two were separated; and the custom grew up of having the one in the morning and the other in the evening. The Agape, in fact, was not merely a symbol of the charity of believers. It became in many places an actual daily meal, at which the poorer brethren partook of the bounty of the rich. It was a memento of that Pentecostal season when believers lived as brothers and had all

The Agape.

things common. It was easily abused, however, and finally had to be done away. Like the kindred ceremony, "the kiss of peace," it continued just long enough to show that even Apostolic customs may be perverted; that the choicest plants, by neglect, may degenerate into weeds.

The kiss of peace.

The Laying on of Hands, as a seal of special gifts, was known to the ancient Patriarchs, who thereby confirmed the blessing of the birthright; was practiced by Moses when he ordained Joshua his successor; and was sanctioned by our Lord for acts of healing or of blessing. In all these senses it was continued by the Apostles.[2] They laid hands on all who had been baptized,—a seal of the spiritual birthright, as well as of such special "gifts" as the Spirit dispensed to each. In this respect it has been aptly termed a kind of lay-ordination, a setting apart to that "kingly priesthood" inherent in all believers. It was also the usual rite of ordination proper. Mission, also, was given in this way.[3] Being eminently a symbol of the kingly office, it was commonly exercised, in conformity with patriarchal precedent, by the highest order of the Ministry: Presbyters, however, concurring and taking part.[4]

The laying on of hands.

Unction, a favorite Eastern symbol of the healing and joy-inspiring work of the Spirit, is often alluded to in the New Testament. It was employed, at least by the Jewish Christian Church, in the visiting of the sick.[5] There is no proof, however, that it was during the first century made a part of

Unction.

[2] Gen. xlviii. 14; Numb. xxvii. 20–23; Mark, vii. 32; xvi. 18; Acts, viii. 19; Heb. vi. 2.

[3] Acts, xiii. 3.

[4] 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

[5] James, v. 14.

ordinary ritual. At a later period it was added both to Baptism and to the Laying on of Hands.

Public worship.

Of the ordinary accessories of public worship, the Church inherited from the Temple and Synagogue an abundant store of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. These, with the Lord's Prayer, with the simple baptismal formula of faith, with the solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper and the Love-feast, with readings from the Old Testament and New, with exercises of the charismata, and with such special prayers as were occasionally prompted by particular inspiration, gave sufficient variety of occupation to devout hearts and minds. That the inspired and rapt utterances of this period melted into air, benefiting only a single generation, is not altogether probable. It is at least possible that the unrivalled and inimitable beauty of Liturgic language derived its peculiar bloom from Pentecostal times.[6] In every age devout feeling can clothe itself in words more or less appropriate. It is not in every age, however, that it has power to crystallize into imperishable gems. This belongs rather to an age of religious and poetic inspiration. If we may judge from the descriptions of heavenly worship in the Apocalypse, or from the peculiar solemnity with which the antecedents and concomitants of the Institution of the Lord's Supper are given in the Gospel of S. John, the mind of that great Apostle was eminently liturgical; and to him, probably, we are indebted for many of the devout utterances which still resound in

Liturgy.

[6] Specimens of liturgic language are to be found all through the New Testament: e. g. Luke, i. 46, 68; ii. 14, 29; Acts, iv. 24; Rom. xvi. 24; Rev. iv. 8; v. 9; xix. 1–7, etc.

all languages from the one end of Christendom to the other.[7]

Hours of prayer probably accorded with those in use among the Jews, though straitened circumstances soon led to nocturnal or "antelucan" meetings. Easter and Pentecost, with a Fast of greater or less duration just before Easter, soon came to be observed. Fasting and prayer preceded ordinations. The Lord's Day took the place of the Sabbath, though the latter continued to be respected by Oriental Christians. Places of prayer were upper rooms, or private houses, given or loaned for the purpose. The distinction, however, between the House of God[8] and private residences was not suffered to be forgotten.

Hours of prayer.

Fasts, Feasts.

Lord's Day.

Places.

As questions of propriety or of particular customs arose, the Apostles settled them on general principles, and sometimes in accordance with current maxims of the day.[9] They were careful to avoid the vice of excessive legislation. Virginity they tolerated, and even encouraged;[10] but always with the proviso, that there should be a natural fitness for that state. Ascetic observances were in like manner allowed; but with a strict understanding, that these things should in nowise interfere with liberty of conscience.[11] So far was this respect for private judgment carried, that S. Paul did not even enforce the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, with regard to meats offered to idols,[12] as an absolute law. He preferred that in all such matters men should judge for themselves.

Observances.

Asceticism

[7] See Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ*; Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, last vol.; Thiersch, *Apostol. Ch.*

[8] 1 Cor. xi. 22.

[9] 1 Cor. xi. 1–16.

[10] 1 Cor. vii.

[11] Rom. xiv.

[12] 1 Cor. x. 18–33.

Morals.

The morals of the Apostolic Church were framed, of course, on the Sermon on the Mount, or on the example of the life of Jesus Christ. By the help of persecution, and in the freshness of first love, there was perhaps a more general approximation to this high standard than Christendom has since exhibited. A community, however, just rescued from the stews of idolatry, and which lived in a moral atmosphere reeking with heathen abominations, was subject to terrible lapses at times, followed by gusts of passionate repentance.[13] In such cases delinquents were cut off from communion, but not from hope.[14] The Christians in Corinth were either worse than in other places, or being more tenderly loved by S. Paul were more sharply reprehended. In the Jewish Christian Church, and in many of the Churches in Asia Minor, there was a rapid decline. It is to be observed, however, that the light which reveals the faults of that period, is the pure white light of uncompromising truth; and that many of the sins into which Christians fell were such as the best heathen hardly considered sins at all. What S. Paul looked upon as abominable, Cato would have regarded as natural and proper.

Social problems.

With social and political problems the Church did not concern itself. Taking the frame-work of society as it was, it aimed to introduce into the relations of rulers and subjects, fathers and children, husbands and wives, masters and slaves, the golden rule of charity. This being present, society would regulate itself. This being absent, no mechanical re-adjust-

[13] 2 Cor. vii. 11.

[14] The case of *Ananias and Sapphira* was an instance of divine severity; not, as is sometimes represented, of Church discipline.

ment would answer a good purpose. Such absolute indifference to political theories in a movement so mighty, so deep, so intellectual as Christianity, is one of the most remarkable features of its early progress. Regarding each relation of life as a particular divine calling, it infused, however, a new element into each. Celibacy was to be hallowed by special devotion to God's service. Marriage was to be elevated by embracing it in the spirit of the Lord's union with the Church. Masters and slaves, as brethren, were to serve one another. High and low, rich and poor, bond and free, were all to be regarded as pilgrims in this world, journeying to one end, running one race, looking forward to one prize; for the final attainment of which, the worst position in life has, in some respects, advantages over the best.[15]

All relations hallowed

[15] 1 Cor. vii. 17, 20, 29–31; Luke, vi. 20. The *Therapeutæ*, according to Philo Judæus, on the ground that "nature has created all men free," regarded "the possession of slaves as wholly contrary to nature," and lived on terms of mutual equality in all things. Menial offices were performed by them in turns.

BOOK II.

AGE OF MARTYRS AND DOCTORS:

FROM

THE DEATH OF S. JOHN

TO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL.

A. D. 100–232.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNING OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

In the history of the Church, as indeed in all history, there are from time to time certain half hours, as it were, of silence in heaven; certain seasons of unpretending but fruitful preparation for the opening of the seals of a new order of events.

A season of silent growth.

Such a season occurred during the latter end of the first century and the beginning of the second, when S. John either in person or in spirit was still presiding over the Churches of Asia Minor. As compared with the outgoing vigor of the Pentecostal age, it was an interval of silence,—of quiet and obscure, though indefatigable industry in carrying on the work previously begun. Though much was done and much suffered, little was originated during this period. Concentration, not expansion, was the order of the day. Few enterprises were undertaken, few brilliant minds arose. The mighty leaders of the Pentecostal age had, with one or two exceptions, departed to their rest; and those who came into their place, being well content to labor upon other men's foundations, and in their doctrine having little

need or wish to depart from the exact words of Apostolic teaching, left but scanty traces of their lives for history to record.

The Seed growing in secret.

Christianity, indeed, presented such a picture at this time, as that suggested by our Lord in one of the most striking and mysterious of His parables of the Kingdom. The soil of heathenism having been duly broken up, and the seed cast in, the great Sower had gone his way, and was slumbering, as it were: the seed, the meanwhile, springing and growing up, no one noticed how. Or, its general appearance might be likened to the quiet but steady process of the finishing of the Temple. The stones and timbers of the spiritual edifice had been hewn and shaped, each for its own appointed place, by inspired Master-builders. What remained for those immediately coming after was with noiseless industry to go on in the line made ready to their hands, and to carry out the plan which had been divinely set before them.

The Temple rising in silence.

A breathing spell.

It was, in short, a kind of breathing spell between two periods of extraordinary energy and activity in the Church. The sun had set upon a great and busy day of missionary zeal; it was destined soon to rise upon an equally busy day of polemical excitement. In the interval between there is a veil upon the Churches; under which, as we learn from the results, there was a vigorous life working, but through which it is impossible to discern aught, save here and there the figure of a Watchman or a Witness: a mere token to posterity that the remarkable stillness of the period was not of death, but of growth.

S. John departed to his rest about the beginning of the century; S. Clement of Rome, and S. Symeon,

the second Bishop of Jerusalem, a little while later. In the great Province of Syria, S. Ignatius kept alive the teaching, and exercised "the gift," which more than thirty years previously he had received from the three chief Apostles. In Asia Minor, S. Polycarp was treasuring the sacred lore which sixty years afterwards he transmitted to a new era of the Church. So, in other parts, a few witnesses remained to testify of the wonders of Apostolic times.[1] Ammias and Quadratus were reverenced as Prophets. Others were still known for evangelic gifts. There were doubtless others also, such as Papias the Millenarian, who corrupted the tradition they had received from the Apostles, and fostered a secret undergrowth of superstition and false doctrine.

S. John and other witnesses.

Evangelists, Prophets.

The profligate Domitian, whose name is connected with the second of the general Persecutions,—whose rage, however, spent itself indifferently upon Jews, philosophers, and every one that had a claim to any sort of merit,—was succeeded by Nerva; and he towards the end of the first century by the virtuous Trajan.

Domitian. Nerva. A. D. 98.

The latter was induced by his reverence, real or pretended, for the gods of the Empire, to give ear to the vile calumnies which continued to be circulated against his Christian subjects, and to indulge, if not to foster, the spirit of persecution. The secrecy forced upon believers by the frivolity as well as cruelty of the world around, afforded undoubtedly a handle against them. What innocence wore for a veil, might easily be assumed as a mask for guilt. Few heathen magistrates would distinguish be-

Trajan.

Third general Persecution.

[1] Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 37–39.

tween the holy rites of the Gospel, and the foul abominations of Gnostic sects, when both were covered over with the same impenetrable cloud.[2] Trajan seems to have taken no pains to inquire into the distinction. By renewing certain edicts, almost become obsolete, against secret societies and assemblies, he gave full scope to the rage of the rabble;[3] so that wherever Christians came together for worship, they were liable to be seized, put to the torture, and summarily condemned, as enemies of the state and despisers of the majesty of the emperor.

Secret societies.

Pliny the Younger, A. D. 104–110.

It was under these circumstances that Pliny the Younger,[4] being appointed Governor of Bithynia, a province evangelized in Apostolic times, undertook for a while to carry out the law in all its rigor. He became convinced, however, that the task he had assumed was beyond his strength. To put all the Christians to death was to run a risk of depopulating large portions of his province. He found, moreover, that the veil of secrecy in which the Christians enshrouded their sacred rites, covered nothing capable of a criminal construction. The temples of the gods, indeed, were beginning to be deserted, and victims had almost ceased to be offered upon their

[2] On the state of the Roman law with regard to persecution, see Jeremie, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, ch. ii., and notes; also, ch. i., § 3.

[3] Eusebius attributes this persecution to popular fury. *History*, lib. iii. 32.

[4] The genuineness of these letters of Pliny has been disputed, but is admitted by the great majority of learned writers. See Lardner's *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, and Gierig's edition of Pliny the Younger (tom. ii. 498–519); also, Gieseler, § 33, n. 7. Pliny's questions to the Emperor were (1) whether any distinction of sex, age, etc., should be made; (2) whether place of penitence should be allowed; (3) whether the mere *name* of Christian should be punished, or some crime should be proven; (4) whether any search was to be made for them.

altars. Christianity was becoming the prevalent religion.[5] But as to its votaries, Pliny, on diligent inquiry, having examined certain apostates who volunteered their evidence, and having put to the torture two deaconesses,[6] could learn nothing against them, except, as he expressed it, their perverse and extravagant superstition. They meet before sunrise, he writes, on a certain day. They sing hymns responsively to one another in praise of Christ as God.[7] They bind themselves together by a *sacrament;* not, however, for any criminal purpose, but as a mutual pledge against theft, adultery, breach of trust, and the like: all which being ended, they break up for a while, and afterwards reassemble for a sociable and innocent repast.

Decay of heathen worship.

Christian worship.

So Pliny wrote to the Emperor,—an accurate, though somewhat meagre outline of Christian life and worship. The term *sacramentum*, which he employs to designate the chief act of communion, is a word of large meaning, covering any thing from a simple verbal oath, in the modern sense, to the most elaborate and impressive ceremonial. Pliny's account, therefore, drawn as it was from the reluctant confessions of persons under torture, though correct as to the general order of Church customs in his day, is of very little value with regard to particulars. These were probably concealed; or, if they were divulged, Pliny was not a man to think them worth mentioning in a formal communication to the Emperor.

Term Sacrament

For the rest, the candid and philosophic governor

[5] Lucian, *Pseudomant.* 25, represents the false prophet as complaining that "Pontus was full of atheists and Christians."

[6] "Ex duabus ancillis quæ *ministræ* dicebantur."

[7] "Carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem."

Good conduct of the Christians.

freely bore witness to the general good conduct of the persecuted sect, and to their peaceable behavior.[8] The vigorous measures, however, which he had pursued against them, were not without effect. Many, under the pressure of persecution, dissembled their belief. The assemblies for worship were less frequently held, or more carefully concealed. The heathen gods began once more to be honored by obsequious crowds.[9] On the other hand, the Emperor, somewhat mollified by the representations of Pliny, allowed the persecution to assume a milder form. None should be punished, he decreed, but those regularly convicted; anonymous accusations should be rejected; those who were brought to trial by responsible accusers, might be allowed to clear themselves by worshipping the gods; but for such as remained quiet, there should be no rigorous inquiry.

Trajan relents.

Believers still molested.

The effect of this decree was to blunt somewhat the edge of persecution. But when such a man as Pliny could regard the conscientious firmness of believers as an offence worthy of the rack, and when such an emperor as Trajan could sanction capital punishment in cases which he deemed undeserving of serious inquiry,[10] there could be no lack of informers on the one hand, or of unjust judges on the other, to

[8] This testimony was the more reliable from the fact, that it was drawn in part from persons who had apostatized "some *three* years, and one or two *twenty* years before."

[9] Pliny inferred from this, that a great number of Christians might be won over from their faith, if "place of repentance" were given.

[10] Tertullian vehemently censures the Emperor on this account: *Apologet.* ii. Mosheim apologizes for Trajan, but the defence is an extremely lame one; attributing his "inconsistency" to fear of "the priests and the multitude," and not to "superstition." *Comment.* vol. i. 8, etc. Neander defends him on somewhat better grounds.

procure accusations and convictions, and to keep the sword continually suspended over the heads of at least the chief leaders of the Church. Many suffered at the hands of the populace. Some were put to death by the order of Trajan himself. Among others, Symeon the second Bishop of Jerusalem has been already mentioned. His successor, Justus, likewise obtained the martyr's crown.

Symeon, Justus. A. D. (about) 107.

But the flower of the noble army of witnesses for Christ at this period was found in the person of S. Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus, the Apostolic Bishop of the Church of Antioch.[11] He was a well-known disciple of the Apostle S. John. Associated for a while with S. Euodius, whom he succeeded in the year sixty-eight, and holding the Mother See of the Church in Syria, he was virtually the head, or, as S. Chrysostom styles him, the Apostle of that important province. As such he became a shining mark for the arrows of persecution.

Ignatius of Antioch

The precise time of his martyrdom has been much disputed, some placing it in the ninth, others in the nineteenth year of the reign of Trajan. It is only known, that Trajan, elated with his victories over the Scythians and Dacians, and about to engage in an expedition in the East, halted at Antioch on his way and showed a disposition to afflict the Christians. The Bishop, with a noble anxiety to shield his flock, fearlessly repaired to the imperial presence. Trajan said to him: "What cacodæmon (that is, ill-starred wretch) art thou, engaged in perverting other people?" Ignatius answered: "None can call Theophorus cacodæmon, for the dæmons

Before Trajan, A. D. 116.

Theophorus.

[11] S. Clement. Rom., S. Ignat., S. Polycarp., Patrum Apostol., etc. Oxon. 1838.

keep away from the servants of God. But if thou callest me cacodæmon because I am hostile to the dæmons, I confess it. Having Christ the King of Heaven on my side, I dispel their snares." Trajan said: "What is the meaning of Theophorus?" Ignatius replied: "One who bears Christ in his heart." "But," said the Emperor, "do not we in that sense bear the Gods, who fight with us against our enemies?" Ignatius answered: "The dæmons of the Gentiles are no gods. There is but one God, who made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein; and one Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son, whose kingdom may I attain!" The sentence of death soon followed: "We command Ignatius who says he bears about the Crucified with him, to be conducted to Rome by a military guard; there to be thrown to wild beasts as a spectacle for the people."

His sentence.

His journey,

That the fact of his punishment might be as widely known as the noble victim himself, he was taken to the city by the longest way. The result was very different from what the Emperor probably intended. It enabled the Martyr to give an example of faith and courage much needed at that time for the feebler class of believers.[12] Every where met by troops of zealous friends, he vindicated his claim to the title Theophorus, and to his own noble maxim, "My love

[12] The "fears" of Ignatius for his flock were probably not a mere dread of the sufferings they might have to undergo, but an anxiety lest they should *fall away*. For all Christians were not equally courageous. Such occasional examples as that of Ignatius were necessary, no doubt, to nerve the faith and courage of the more timid crowd. This being considered, the eagerness for martyrdom displayed by this noble confessor is defensible on rational grounds. When Polycarp suffered, a half century later, circumstances were different and a different course was advisable.

hath been crucified." A Divine influence accompanied him from city to city. In his person the Cross seemed to be again uplifted. Everywhere he took care to season his conversation with salt, writing epistles to the Churches, dropping words of hope and comfort upon the multitudes who thronged to see him, calling his chains his spiritual jewels, and enlivening the gravity of his discourses with a chaste vivacity peculiarly his own. In this latter respect, S. Ignatius was among the sprightliest as well as holiest of martyrs. From his adamantine soul, as the Greeks describe it, the waters of an almost playful fancy were continually welling up. His military guard he compard to "ten leopards," which the kinder he was to them became only the more wanton. The jaws of the lions which awaited him in the Roman Amphitheatre he regarded as a mill which was to grind his wheat into an offering of fine flour unto the Lord. With sallies of this kind, with stirring exhortations, with grave advice, and with a face which the ancients describe as radiant with joy, he made his journey to the great Metropolis a genuine Christian ovation.

His sallies.

He was thrown to the lions in the Roman Amphitheatre on the great popular Feast of the Saturnalia. The whole city flocked together on such occasions. It was providentially ordered, therefore, that when the courageous old man descended into the arena, he was, more conspicuously than any of the martyrs before or after him, "a spectacle unto the whole world, even to angels and to men." Long before his arrival at Rome, he had had the consolation of learning that his Church, which he had committed to

Final scene.

the special charge of his friend Polycarp, was no longer subject to persecution.

His remains.

Of his body, torn and mangled by the lions, a few relics are said to have been collected by the diligence of his friends.[13] The nobler legacy that he left to posterity in his famous Epistles, has been more severely handled. In such portions, however, as have survived the fury of a long and searching controversy,[14] whether we take the seven Epistles commonly

[13] In his Epistle to the Romans, he expresses a hope that nothing might be left to be a trouble to his friends: that he might *disappear* to the world to appear with Christ: that he might *set* to the world to rise with Christ.

[14] The asperity of certain critics towards this father does not seem to have abated, if one may judge from two recent examples. The first is Bunsen. The word Sige, it appears—a Valentinian Gnostic term for God—in the Epistle to the Trallians, was for a long while considered an anachronism, and was used as an argument against the genuineness of the Epistle. The recent discovery of the works of Hippolytus has proved that the term was used by Simon Magus: the anachronism and the argument, therefore, fall to the ground. Bunsen is forced to acknowledge this; but instead of candidly confessing the error, he turns upon Bishop Pearson for contending (as he had a right to do before the recent discoveries) that Ignatius used the word in the ordinary sense, and not in the Gnostic: see B.'s *Hippol.* vol. i. p. 59. The second instance is Dr. Schaff. The latter acknowledges the genuineness of the seven Epistles; but, wishing to find fault somewhere, accuses the noble martyr of "something offensive" because he exhorts his friend Polycarp to be "more studious, . . . more zealous, . . . *and to flee the arts of the Devil.*" Dr. Schaff forgets that mutual exhortation was by early Christians considered a duty, and that Bishops were as willing to be warned against "the arts of the devil" as the humblest catechumen. In the same way, the martyr's earnestly expressed wish that the Romans would not seek to save him from martyrdom, but would rather *pray for him that he might be found a sacrifice to God,* is set down as "boisterous impatience and morbid fanaticism." That the prospect of being eaten by lions may have had a stimulating effect upon the holy Bishop's imagination, and that he may have expressed his willingness to suffer somewhat more warmly than if he had written quietly in his study, I can readily conceive. But to characterize this generous warmth as "boisterous impatience and morbid fanaticism" is to war against every noble impulse of the human heart. Writings more free than the Ignatian Epistles from fanati-

received, or the briefer fragments of the Syriac translation, there are unmistakable marks of his character and genius. Their freshness and originality is such as we find in no other of the Apostolic fathers. The style is terse, sparkling, and sententious. With allusions everywhere to the sense of Holy Scripture, but with few literal quotations, and possessing to a remarkable degree that quickness of spiritual discernment which *hearkens*, as he happily expresses it, *to the silence of Jesus*, Ignatius wrote with a soul still moist with the morning dew of the first outpouring of the Spirit. Between the age of inspiration and the era of reflective and discursive thought which marked the latter half of the century, he is one of the most valuable of the connecting links. His position.

The testimony he bore to the doctrine and discipline of his times is found in all copies of his writings, and is therefore not affected by the critical objections which have been made to portions of the text. On the subject of Episcopacy his language is decisive. The proper Divinity of the Son of God, the reality of the Incarnation, and the anti-Gnostic maxim that even things done in the body are spiritual if done in the Lord, are expressed with equal force and precision. The hortatory parts of the Epistles reveal a state of things in the Churches differing little from what existed when Timothy received his instructions from S. Paul. The widows continued to be the special charge of the chief Pastor. Masters and slaves, husbands and wives, His witness to Doctrine and Discipline.

cism, and from every other kind of bitterness, can nowhere be found. See *Antient Syriac Version*, etc., by W. Cureton, M. A. For a summary of the argument in favor of the *Seven Epistles*, see Prof. Blunt's *Lectures* on the *History of the First Three Centuries*; also Dr. Schaff's *History of the Church*.

are to grow in grace by faithful performance of their duties to one another. Marriage is honored; virginity is moderately commended.[15] With the exception, in short, of a brief and obscure allusion to Satan's supposed ignorance of some of the mysteries of the Incarnation, every thing in these writings is indicative of an age of simple faith, averse to speculation, averse to innovation, and jealously conservative of truth and order, in the letter and spirit of them both.

Two witnesses.

With the remarkable witness of Pliny, and Ignatius,—the one a heathen philosopher, the other a Christian Bishop, but both testifying to the vigor of Christianity at this comparatively unrecorded period of its history,—we pass with rapid steps to an epoch which more completely lifts the veil of obscurity and silence, opening the seals of a new era of Church life, and showing the seeds of good and evil, which had been springing the meanwhile, in the full luxuriance of their growth.

CHAPTER II.

HADRIAN AND THE ANTONINES.

Fourth Persecution, A. D. 117–138.

The ablest and wisest Emperors were not by any means the most favorable to Christianity. Trajan is known in history as the third of the Persecutors.

[15] The much abused phrase, *Nothing without the Bishop*, is used chiefly in this connection; namely, that in undertaking the two most critical, and momentous of all engagements—virginity and marriage—young persons should not think themselves wiser than their Pastors. S. Ignatii *Ep. ad Polycarp.* 5.

Under Hadrian his successor, a philosophic prince of varied talents and virtues, whose virtue, however, seems to have possessed him as a spirit of unrest, things were but little altered for the better. Persecution was continually breaking out in one place or another. But the severity with which it was conducted depended mainly upon the temper of the mob, and the greater or less zeal of the provincial magistrates.

Progress of the Gospel.

It is of little use to look for recondite reasons for the injustice, or indifference, of these politically wise Emperors towards their Christian subjects. The Church undoubtedly was becoming a great power. It was felt, moreover, to be a power of change. The more thoughtful magistrates, in proportion as they were patriotic and religious in the heathen sense, were nervously alive to the importance of this fact; and of course the more alive, as Christianity was to them an incomprehensible, and, some of them half suspected, an irrepressible phenomenon.

Gradual.

Yet they were by no means settled in their judgment, or consistent in their course. As a man, about to be overtaken by the flow of a great tide, first notices with indifference a pool here or there forming stealthily in the sands, but, at last, when he sees the pools enlarging and rapidly multiplying, is awakened to his danger, and now advances, now retreats, the hostile element confronting him whichever way he turns: such was the position, and such the policy of the magistrates of the Empire, in dealing with Christianity.

As a growth.

Mere superstitions they could easily have tolerated with Roman magnanimity. But Christianity, they saw, was no common superstition. Nor was it a violent enthusiasm, sweeping

with foaming and threatening front along a measurable channel. What was infinitely more perplexing, it was singularly quiet, singularly peaceable, singularly gradual in its advance. It came in as a growth: it rose as a Solway tide.[1] Indeed, so uniform was its progress in all parts of the Roman world, so simultaneous in places far remote from one another, that whether it was rising upon society, or society was sinking into it, was a question that the philosophy of the times found it difficult to answer. There were many who looked upon it therefore as a sort of mysterious epidemic. And it was this mystery, in fact, this evidence of power without any of the pomp and circumstance of power, that baffled the counsels of the Emperors, and entangled them in a policy as futile as it was unjust.

As a tide.

Inordinate zeal.

It is true, however, that there were Christians who gave needless offence, by the display of an inordinate desire of martyrdom. When Arrius Antoninus,[2] probably about this period, opened his tribunal in Asia for accusations against them, they voluntarily came forward in such numbers, that the governor, veiling his humanity under an appearance of contempt, was forced to drive them away. There are ropes enough,

[1] The steady increase of Christians in all ranks of society was a common talk among the heathen; and the somewhat exaggerated expressions of the Apologists to that effect are often put in the mouths of the enemies of the Gospel. Thus Tertullian: "*Men cry out* that the state is beset, that the Christians are in their fields, in their forts, in their islands. They mourn, as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and now even every rank is going over to this sect." *Apologet.* i. For numerous references to passages bearing on this subject see Oxf. *Translation of Tertull.* p. 3, *note* g.

[2] Tertull. *ad Scap.* 5. There would seem to have been two of the name of Arrius; the one under Hadrian, the other in the times of Commodus.

said he, to hang yourselves with, if life is such a burden to you.

But such displays on the part of a certain class, were symptoms of a distemper which, at this time, pervaded all orders of men, and, in a measure, all forms of religion. The decay of Heathenism was filling the world with wild dreams. Fanaticism abounded. The Carpocratians and other Gnostic or semi-heathen sects, made their meetings the scenes of abominable orgies. The Jews were in a ferment of religious wars. They had rejected their true Messiah; but the vision of a Messiah, ever present to their minds, had become a great stone, as it were, that was perpetually falling on them and grinding them to powder. Under Trajan, they had perpetrated a horrible massacre of the Gentiles in Egypt. Similar events had occurred in Libya, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Palestine and Mesopotamia. Under Hadrian, Bar Cochba claimed to be the Messiah, and furiously persecuted the Christians. In this rebellion, which terminated, as we have seen,[3] with the second overthrow of Jerusalem, more than six hundred thousand Jews are said to have perished; and by famine and other evils that followed, Judæa was almost depopulated. There was similar excitement among the heathen. The Egyptians were running frantic over the supposed discovery of their bull-god, Apis.[4] Magical arts began to be revived; and to these, and even viler superstitions, the philosophic Emperor fell an easy victim. The worship that he instituted to his deified minion Antinous made him an object of contempt to the very heathen.

Fanaticism general.

The Jews.

A. D. 115.

A. D. 135.

The heathen.

[3] Book i. ch. vii. See Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iii. 2, 6.

[4] Spartianus *de Api;* Euseb. *de Præparat.* ii. 11.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if the Christians, partly from being somewhat infected with the evil spirit of the times, partly from being confounded with wretches who assumed the Name of Christ to profane it, and partly from a new edge being given to the malignity both of Jews and Heathen, suffered in many ways not intended by the laws, and became more than ever the objects of popular violence. In the Martyrologies,[5] it is said that Faith, Hope and Charity were among the sufferers of this time, being put to death at Rome, along with Wisdom, their mother. These holy sisters, the martyrs of every age, had doubtless begun to suffer then. Besides them, however, there seem to have been victims of a more tangible description, in Italy, Sardinia, Greece, Palestine, and all the provinces of the East.[6]

Faith, Hope, and Charity.

It was during Hadrian's reign that Quadratus, Bishop of Athens,[7] wrote an Apology for the Christians, and presented it to the Emperor. He was a disciple of the Apostles (many of whose miracles he had seen with his own eyes), and a distinguished Evangelist and Prophet. Becoming Bishop of Athens, he labored with great success in reestablishing the Church, which, in that part of Greece, had fallen into decay. Hadrian, visiting the city in the course of his endless travels, was equally intent upon reviving heathenism.[8] He seems, however, to have treated

Quadratus Evangelist and Bishop.

Hadrian in Athens.

[5] Martyrolog. Roman. *August.* i.

[6] The number of Martyrs at various periods, is a subject that has been much discussed, to little or no purpose. The extremes (i. e., the *reasonable* extremes) are represented by Dodwell, *Disertat. Cyprian.* xi., and Ruinart., *Acta Martyr. Selecta et Sincera: Prefat.* Most modern writers take the mean between these—a process more easy than satisfactory.

[7] Euseb. iv. 3; iii. 37.

[8] He was there initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Hadrian's active mind being superstitious, as well as philosophic, I can see no improbability in the story of Lam-

the venerable Apologist with all due respect. The memorial presented by Quadratus on this occasion, and a similar discourse written by Aristides a converted philosopher, were highly esteemed by the Christians, and are said to have had some effect upon the mind of the Emperor. Aristides.

A greater effect was produced by a letter from Serenius Granianus, Proconsul of Asia Minor, representing to the Emperor the injustice of allowing Christians to be put to death on a mere popular outcry. Other governors had made similar complaints. Hadrian replied by a famous letter to Minucius Fundanus,[9] successor of Granianus, in which he forbids any one to be put to death, except in due course of law, and orders that false accusers should be rigorously judged and punished. Edict against informers.

Antoninus Pius, Hadrian's successor, is said to have renewed this favorable edict, and seems to have done his utmost to have it honestly enforced. He was moved to this by his own humane disposition, and possibly by an apology of Justin, the philosopher and martyr. Beyond occasional outbreaks of fanaticism, therefore, in consequence of a long series of public calamities,[10] the Christians were little troubled in the exercise of their religion. Indeed, the sufferings they were called to endure were hardly more than were necessary to draw a line betwixt them and the Gnostic sects; the latter, as a general rule, Antoninus Pius, A. D. 138–161.

pridius, (*Alex. Severus*, xxiv.,) that he erected some temples *without statues*, with a view to admit Christ among the Roman gods. The same feeling that induced the Athenians to have an altar to "the unknown God," may have suggested such a course; but when he found the priests opposed to it, his reverence for the established religion (Spartian. *Vit. Hadrian.* xxii.) made him desist.

[9] Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iv. 9.

[10] Famines, inundations, earthquakes, fires. Jul. Capitolin., *Vita Antonin. Pii*, ix.

not caring enough for the Name of Christ to bear persecution for it.

Marcus Aurelius, A. D. 161-180.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was, as Gibbon has described him, "of a severer and more laborious kind of virtue" than his amiable predecessor. "He embraced the rigid system of the stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent." To his subjects in general, he was just and beneficent. But, unfortunately for the peace of the Christians, their religion was particularly offensive to Stoic pride. The imperial sophist might declaim of the happy frame of mind which enables one to await annihilation with a stern composure. A Christian would merely pity such rigidity of soul. Man is not made for a leaden and passionless immobility: he is benevolently created for life and hope. Not suppression of the affections, but their proper cultivation, is the rule of duty. Not annihilation, but a blissful resurrection,—not death, but life,—is the doctrine to inspire true courage, true patience, true temperance, true virtue of every kind.

Hostile to the Gospel.

The Stoic ideal.

Marcus Aurelius felt this antagonism between his own philosophy and the faith of his Christian subjects.[11] "It is admirable," says he, "that the soul should be prepared for whatever may await her: to

[11] Neander (*Ch. Hist.* i., ii.) calls attention to a "child-like piety," which the Emperor had imbibed from his mother, and which sometimes led him to the expression of the noblest sentiments, and sometimes involved him in abject superstition. A strong religious feeling of this kind must have been terribly galled at times by the artificial stoicism in which he had tried to encase it; and the irritation thence arising may account for his peculiar hostility to the Christians. To hate a thing cordially, there must be a certain amount of sympathy with it.

be extinguished, to be dispersed, or whatever else may happen. But prepared, I say, not with mere obstinacy, like that of the Christians, not with an idle show of joy, but in a grave, considerate, reasonable manner, so as to make a serious impression on the minds of other people." Judging Christian hope from the stand-point of stoicism, he considered it a mere affectation. Besides this, the Gospel, as he could not fail to see, imparted a peculiar power. Under its inspiration, not the perfect man merely, not *the king* in the stoic sense, but women and children, and even slaves, could face the great terror undismayed. In this respect, philosophy had begun to feel itself rebuked. About the time of the Emperor's accession, a hardened wretch of the name of Peregrinus,[12] who in the course of a bad life had been successively parricide, Christian, priest, confessor, and finally an apostate from the faith and a professor of Cynicism, attempted to prop the failing credit of philosophy by burning himself publicly at the Olympic games. An immense crowd was present. Some laughed, some admired. Contrary, perhaps, to the expectation of Peregrinus, none had the humanity to interfere. After many delays and tremors, he threw himself at length into the devouring element. The act was indeed but a vile caricature of Christian self-devotion. It shows a point, however, in which philosophy felt its own deficiency. Where Stoicism could boast of an occasional suicide, Christianity could point to an unfailing succession of Martyrs. This being the case, there was no course left for a man of discernment like the Em-

The Cynic martyr.

[12] Lucian *de morte Peregrini.*

peror, but either to embrace the Gospel, or to treat it as an enthusiasm dangerous to the peace of his subjects, and to the welfare of the State.

Three types of the age.

Among the numerous sufferers of this reign there are three names so distinguished, and so typical of certain phases of the Church life of the age, as to demand for each a separate and particular account.

Polycarp.

Polycarp, the disciple of John, the bosom friend of Ignatius, and for threescore years the trusted depository of Apostolic tradition, is the representative of an age of simple faith, observant of the old land-marks, but not much exercised as yet by "the oppositions of science," whether true or false. In

Pothinus.

Pothinus, a disciple of the same school, and in his companions the Lyonnese Martyrs, we observe the same devout faith, but with it all the symptoms of an age of sterner and more complicated trials. The war against heathenism from without, is accompanied by a protest against the beginnings of heathen-

Justin Martyr.

ish corruptions from within. Justin, the Philosopher, Apologist and Martyr, more fully represents this struggle, both outward and inward, as leaving the high ground of simple martyrdom, and descending into the dusty arena of philosophical, skeptical, and critical discussion.

Transition Period.

And this was a necessary stage in the Church's progress here on earth. A religion which fails to satisfy the mind of man can never rise above the level of a popular superstition. The Church for awhile might be content to announce her message in the simple, pregnant phrases, which appeal only to the few that have ears to hear. But this would not answer always. As S. Ignatius foresaw, on his way to martyrdom, other times were coming, with a

demand for combatants who could speak face to face with all kinds of men; who, as skilful pilots, should be in readiness for winds from all quarters of the heavens; who, as athletes thoroughly trained, could stand like an anvil under repeated blows, knowing that to be smitten is as needful for the victory as the power to smite.[13] In proportion as we appreciate this truth we are prepared to do justice to three phases of Church life, which appeared successively, or rather grew one out of another, before the end of the second century. An age of simple witness bears within it an age of elaborate Apologetics; and this again developes into a confused and troublous era of religious discussion and polemical zeal. Three ages.

As types of three aspects of this period of transition, the names of Polycarp, Pothinus and Justin Martyr are entitled to the large place they hold in the early history of the Church.

CHAPTER III.

S. POLYCARP.

The city of Smyrna, at the beginning of the second century, was hardly inferior to Ephesus in social and political importance. The Church established there at quite an early period had remained, as we infer from the Apocalypse, singularly uncorrupt; its Angel, rich in good works amid temporal poverty and affliction, having guarded it successfully against Church in Smyrna.

[13] S. Ignat. *ad Polycarp.* 2, 3.

the arts of that semi-Jewish, semi-Gnostic philosophy, with which the Asiatic cities at that time, and for some while after, were more or less infected.[1]

Polycarp.

Whether the Angel thus commended was the admirable Bishop subsequently so well known under the name of Polycarp, is matter of conjecture only.[2] Certain it is, however, that the saintly Bishop of the second century proved not unworthy of the eulogy pronounced upon the faithful Angel of the first. For twenty years or more the disciple of S. John, and the trusted friend of S. Ignatius, he first comes before us a sober pastor at the head of a well ordered flock, both "sheep and shepherd nailed to the cross of Christ," at the time when the Martyr of Antioch halted for a few days at Smyrna, on his memorable journey to Rome. The latter entrusted him with the dearest remaining care of his life. He was to have a fit head provided for the Church at Antioch; to write to all the Churches which Ignatius could not write to himself; and to do what else in his discretion might be found expedient.

The shepherd and the flock.

His style and character.

His style, in the portion that remains of his excellent Epistle to the Philippians,[3] is in keeping with the sobriety and simplicity of his character. There is nothing in it of the terseness of Ignatius, that concentrated power which makes old thoughts crystallize into something new and rare. Holy Scripture is the staple of his writings. He quotes much,—quotes generally in the letter, and seems drawn along by the sacred text, as if he loved it too much to let go his

[1] Rev. ii. 8–10.

[2] The probabilities (from the age of Polycarp at the time of his death, etc.) are against the identity of the two.

[3] Patr. Apostol. Oxon. 1838.

hold, or to break it off abruptly from any of its connections. Less brilliant than Ignatius, and perhaps with less claim to any "gift" of divine illumination, he was eminently fitted for the providential end for which his life on earth seems to have been so extraordinarily prolonged. Not faithful merely, but literally and punctiliously faithful, conservative of jots and tittles, he was just the man for a *theodromos*, as Ignatius phrases it[4],—a divine message-bearer from the Apostolic age to a second and third generation of zealous witnesses to the Truth.

A theodrome.

"It seems to me that I still hear him telling"—so writes Irenæus,[5] the most intellectual of the disciples of his school—"how he had conversed with S. John and other eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ; repeating the very words he had heard from their mouths, with many particulars of the miracles and doctrines of that divine Saviour, all of which was in closest conformity with what we learn from the Sacred Scriptures, from the writings, namely, of those who were themselves eye-witnesses of the Word of Life."

Portrait by Irenæus.

About the middle of the century, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, he made a visit to Rome, desirous of conference with Anicetus, then Bishop of that city. There he bore his testimony against Marcion, Carpocrates, and other heretics of the day. On the question already agitated in the Church—the practice, namely, of feasting like the Jews on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan,[6]—he maintained the tradition of S. John and S. Philip against Anicetus and the Roman custom. Neither party had power to con-

Visit to Rome, A. D. 158.

[4] *Ad Polycarp.* 7.
[5] Apud. Euseb. v. 20.
[6] For the Paschal question, see ch. ix. of this book.

Two traditions.

vince the other. Against the practice of S. John and S. Philip, the Romans alleged that of S. Peter and S. Paul. Neither Anicetus nor Polycarp seems to have dreamed of any authority vested in the Roman See by which the controversy might be once for all decided. They parted as they had met, in peace. And for nearly two centuries longer, the Christians of Asia Minor, with a firmness sufficiently vexatious at the time, but precious in after ages as a testimony to the primitive equality of the Churches, adhered to their tradition.

Excessive zeal.

In his martyr-death, as for so many years in his martyr-life, Polycarp was still the faithful theodrome; not running before, but with tranquil humility content to follow after, the will of God. We have already had occasion to notice, that, owing in part to continuous persecution, and in part to a contagious enthusiasm which the Church resisted but not with absolute success, the glory of witnessing for Christ was sometimes coveted by persons unworthy of the honor. Hence a needless asperity at times, or even a species of bravado, before the tribunals. Hence, among some, an actual courting or provoking of popular hatred. Hence, in short, many

Volunteer martyrs.

sore scandals to the Church. Early in the century the wretched Peregrinus had shown that one might stand up manfully as a confessor, in times of persecution, and yet be unable to keep his feet amid the fumes of subsequent applause. More recently a Phrygian of the name of Quintus had thrust himself forward as a volunteer for martyrdom; but as soon as he heard the lions roar he was ready to sacrifice to idols. Lapses of this kind, becoming more frequent as the Church increased in numbers, made it

incumbent on pastors and leaders to set an example of a new kind of confessorship,—the confessorship, namely, of a prudent circumspection: a thing vastly more difficult in stirring times than any other form of faith and courage.

The circus

The first demand for the sacrifice of Polycarp arose from the amphitheatre at Smyrna, on occasion, we are told, of the martyrdom of Germanicus with eleven other Christians of Philadelphia. These amphitheatres,—huge mouths of hell as the Christians properly esteemed them, with their beast-fights and gladiator-shows, bubbling with all the lewd and cruel passions of the idolatrous rabble of great cities,—were the recognized feeders of that blood-thirsty spirit which disgraced the civilization of the old Roman world; and so long as they were tolerated, were unfailing fountain-heads of new persecutions. There is a fearful description by S. Augustine[7] of the way the soul could be wrought on, and metamorphosed in these abominable dens. How horror stiffened into cruelty at the first sight of blood; how cruelty, amid the growls of lacerated brutes, and the cheers and jeers of monsters in human shape, elevated itself into a sort of demoniacal possession; how the shrinking novice of a few hours since, now "beheld, shouted, kindled," being magnetized, as it were, into a phrensy of mingled terror and delight: all this has been vividly portrayed, and to those who have observed the plastic nature of the soul is by no means difficult to imagine.

Its baleful influence.

Between the darkness of such scenes and the pure light of Christianity, there could be no sort of con-

[7] S. Augustine, *Confess.* vi. 8. On the subject of the indecency and barbarity of heathen shows, see Tertullian *de Spectaculis.*

cord. Regarding them as the rallying-point of the dæmons whom the Gospel was dislodging from shrine and grove, believers looked upon them with an aversion not to be disguised. The hate, of course, was fully reciprocated. When the name of Polycarp, therefore, was uttered in the theatre of Smyrna, it was caught up at once, and resounded on every side.

Polycarp called for. "Away with the atheists,[8] let Polycarp be brought!" It was a popular delirium, not to be resisted, not to be evaded.

His prudence. The saint, however, yielding to the urgency of his friends, withdrew for a while from the reach of the infuriated crowd. In a retired country-seat, at no great distance from the city, he spent his time in prayers night and day for the welfare of the Churches, and tranquilly awaited the good pleasure of the Lord. Hunted from this place of refuge, he magnanimously yielded to entreaty and fled to another. Meanwhile

His dream he had had a vision in which his pillow appeared all in flames, and on the strength of it had foretold the kind of martyrdom he was called to undergo. Discovered in his second retreat, he said simply, "*the Lord's will be done*," and gave himself up. Two hours were granted him for prayer, his captors the meanwhile regaling themselves with a collation, which the venerable Bishop, mindful to the last of the duty of hospitality, had been careful to provide.

His confession. On his way to the city he was overtaken by Herod the Irenarch and Nicetas his father, who took him up into their chariot, and tried to persuade him to

[8] "We are called Atheists," says Justin Martyr, "and so far as those called gods by the heathen are concerned, we plead guilty to the charge; but not so with regard to the only true God, etc." *Apol.* ii. 6.

call Cæsar Lord, and offer the sacrifice enjoined in such cases. He simply answered, I can not do what you advise. Brought before Statius Quadratus the Proconsul, he was ordered to repeat the prayer for the destruction of the godless, which, being intended as an imprecation against the Christians, had become a gathering cry of the Smyrna rabble. But the language of the prayer was capable of a Christian interpretation. Polycarp, therefore, was content to repeat the words prescribed, looking up with beaming face towards Heaven. When commanded to curse Christ, he mildly answered, Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and He hath done me no ill: how then can I curse my King and Saviour? To the further demand, that he should swear by the Fortune of Cæsar, he replied that he was a Christian, the meaning of which name he was ready to explain, if the Proconsul would grant him a hearing.

False kindness.

Moved probably by a feeling of compassion, the Proconsul then advised him to plead his cause before the people. But Polycarp was not to be led into such a crooked course. He saw, what certain apologists for the Magistrates of that age are strangely blind to,[9] that men in authority had no right to put the sword committed to them, into the hands of an irresponsible, bloodthirsty mob, and then to wash their hands, Pilate-like, as though they were innocent in the matter. Polycarp, doubtless, was well aware of this. To the soft words of the Proconsul, therefore, he replied with dignity and firmness:—

[9] It is true, however, that many magistrates were ready to connive at the escape of Christians; perhaps most of them were, when believers could be induced to accept dishonorable modes of escape. See Tertull. *ad Scap.* iv.

Honor where due.

"Before you I am willing to make answer; for Princes and Magistrates are ordained of God, and we Christians are taught to render them the honor that is due: but with regard to the populace, they have no such claim, and I am under no obligation to plead before them."

His martyrdom, A. D. 167–9.

The games at this time being over, Polycarp, according to his prediction, was condemned to the stake. The Christians of Smyrna, who witnessed and recorded the transaction, saw the flames gather round and enclose him as in a fiery pavilion, while a delicious perfume floated through the air.[10] As the fire did not reach him at once, some one, perhaps out of compassion, plunged a sword into his side. His friends gathered what could be found of his remains, and reverentially consigned them to a tomb. "There," they add, with a discriminating piety worthy of their saintly teacher, "we hope to assemble hereafter, and celebrate with joy the day of his martyrdom; not to worship him, however, as the Pagans say, but to contemplate the example he has set, and to learn, if needs be, to imitate it. As to worship, we can never abandon Jesus Christ. We worship Him because He is the Son of God. The martyrs we love and follow, because of the very great love they have shown for their King and Master."[11]

Honors paid him.

Conservative spirit.

Such was the end of Polycarp, a man full of years, full of fruit—the very embodiment of that quiet, conservative, order-loving spirit, which was eminently

[10] These facts, easily enough explained, do not seem to be mentioned as miracles, but merely as pleasing incidents; just as one notices a fine day on any special occasion, or any other welcome coincidence.

[11] *Ecclesiæ Smyrnensis de Martyrio S. Polycarpi Epistol. Circularis.* Patrum Apostol., etc.

characteristic of the Churches of S. John. He left numerous disciples, many of whose names were recorded in the roll of Martyrs. It is said, in a doubtful passage of the Epistle which describes his death, that when the sword pierced his side, a dove[12] flew out of the wound and winged its way toward Heaven. The story is without value as a matter of fact; but, if it were true, there could be no better symbol of the change that was already taking place in the aspect of Christianity. The dove-like temper was already in large measure departed. A spirit not less needful for the times—a spirit of enquiry, agitation and polemical discussion—was rapidly approaching in its place.

Seal of the persecution.

It is also said in the Epistle, that "he appeased the persecution; sealing it up, as it were, with his testimony." This applies, however, only to Smyrna and other cities of Asia. In Gaul, the persecution continued some years longer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LYONNESE MARTYRS.

Gallic Church, A. D. (about) 140.

From the tree planted by S. Paul and watered as we have seen for nearly a century by S. John and S. Polycarp, vigorous scions had sprung up on the distant banks of the Rhone, among the Græco-Gallic population of Lyons and Vienne.[1] The venerable

[12] This story is not found in all copies; and where it occurs, it has been ingeniously conjectured, that *ep'aristera* (on the left) has been changed by transcribers into *peristera* (dove).

[1] It is probable enough that other foundations had been laid

Pothinus, a friend of Polycarp, and of about the same age, left Asia, it is probable towards the middle of the century, and settling in Lyons became Bishop there. With him was a numerous and zealous band, among whom the name of Irenæus is most interesting to the modern reader. Under their auspices, the Church grew and flourished, as Churches then grew; making little noise in the world, and keeping scant record of itself for the benefit of posterity, till the blade and the ear had matured into the full corn, and the sickle of persecution was sent in to reap the first harvest.

First cry for blood, A. D. (about) 170–176.

As usual at this period, the first cry for blood was uttered among the brutalized rabble of the Amphitheatre. We learn from Tacitus how admirably the Province, as it was called, having been first vanquished by the power of the sword, was gradually tamed by the luxurious appliances—the baths, theatres and temples—of the wise and wicked Circe of the Seven Hills. The history of Christianity is a proof that the taming was hardly more than skin-deep. A capricious mob, fawning on the hand that fed them with bread and circus-shows, is all that heathenism ever made of the lower classes; and even this had continually to be repurchased with fresh sacrifices. Beast-fights led to gladiator-fights, and, gladiator-fights becoming tame, the prisons were emptied into the arena; and, at length, the jails themselves yielding an inadequate

Heathen rabble.

in Gaul prior to this, but nothing is known of them. See Lorenz. *Summ. Hist. Gallo-Franc.*, and Gregorii Turon. *Hist.* &c. It shows the tenacity of the Greek foundation, that as late as the sixth century, Cæsarius of Arles taught his people to sing indifferently in Greek and Latin. L'abbé Guettée opens his history with a lively chapter *sur l'église Gallo-Romaine:* his facts, however, bear more on l'église Gallo-Grecque.

supply to the phrensied cry for blood,[2] hungry eyes began to be cast upon the little flock of Christians.

Christians mobbed.

Attention once turned that way, persecution followed as a matter of course. In the language of the Lyonnese Confessors, the devil himself went to and fro through the streets of the city, in the shape of a savage beast, and stirred popular excitement into an ungovernable phrensy. Christians began to be hooted and pelted, wherever they appeared. The next step was to sieze them and drag them into the forum; where, accused by a blood-thirsty mob, and interrogated by complaisant magistrates, they confessed the Name of Christ and were cast into prison. From the jails they are carried once more, for insult rather than for trial, into the presence of the Prefect of the city.

Thrown into prison.

Heroic conduct.

At this point of the proceedings occurs one of those acts of heroic self-devotion, which, happening as it did in a luxurious and degenerate age, could hardly fail to impress the minds, of the more thoughtful at least, of the persecutors themselves. Vettius Epagathus, a youth of honorable character and station, had not been numbered as yet among the objects of attack. But when he saw the injustice with which his brethren were treated, he could not contain himself. He advanced to the tribunal. He

[2] "Fluctuat æquoreo fremitu rabieque faventum,
Carceribus nondum resolutis, mobile vulgus."

"But we leaping, raging like madmen, striking each other, ... and sometimes going naked from the show." For much more to the same effect, see Onuphr. Panvin. *de Lud. Circ.* Bad as the circus was, it was considered innocent, in comparison with the filthy enormities of the theatre. Still, the former, says Lactantius, was more maddening; for the spectators became so excited, that "they often proceeded from words to blows, and a general battle ensued." Lactant. *Divin. Institut.* 63.

demanded to be heard on the side of the accused. "Art thou, then, a Christian?" asked the governor in reply. Vettius confessed, and was condemned to death. "Thus he showed himself a *paraclete*," says the Lyonnese narrative, "being filled with the true Paraclete, which enabled him to show his love for the brethren, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

A true Paraclete.

Ten fall away.

Of the others who had been seized, about ten fell away, to the great discomfort of their brethren. Certain slaves also were forced, by threats of imprisonment or by actual torture, to give information against their masters. Incest, conspiracy, and Thyestean repasts, were among the crimes alleged on the testimony of these wretches. But no accusation was too gross for the fanatical credulity of the public. What is more surprising, even well-instructed persons, relatives and friends of the accused, allowed their minds to be contaminated by the foul breath of calumny; and palpable lies, by dint of repetition, acquired all the force and certainty of unquestionable facts. The victims, therefore, suffered without pity and without redress. Huddled together in dark and loathsome jails, stretched on the rack, cut, mangled, roasted, burnt, and subjected in short to every variety of torture, they had no resource, no argument, but the unvarying confession, "I am a Christian: no wickedness is practiced or tolerated among us."

Crimes alleged.

Tortures.

It is pleasing to observe, that among the Lyonnese Confessors the supreme merit of charity held its proper place. They prayed fervently for those who had fallen in the hour of trial, and their prayers were answered. The greater part of the lapsed returned,

Charity of the sufferers.

and recovered their good standing. What was vastly more difficult, the Martyrs were taught by a common calamity to forget certain differences of opinion, which at other times, perhaps, had received too much of their attention. One instance of this deserves to be particularly noticed.

Ascetic party.

From the time of S. Paul there had existed in the Church an ascetic or encratite party, which sometimes as a matter of voluntary self-discipline, and in some cases from a less justifiable motive, abstained altogether from animal food and from wine. Alcibiades, one of the confessors, belonged to this class. As soon, however, as one of his companions was moved in a dream to warn him that it was "neither right nor proper to reject the good creatures of God," he changed his course and thankfully partook of what was set before him. There is nothing that pride more reluctantly gives up than a supererogatory virtue. The merit of Alcibiades, therefore, in yielding so cheerfully to the scruples of others, was justly regarded by the Lyonnese as an extraordinary proof of the presence of God's Spirit among them.

Alcibiades.

Sanctus.

Deacon Sanctus, probably of Latin or Gallic origen, was a martyr such as S. Ignatius would have delighted to contemplate. He stood like an anvil under the strokes of his tormentors, and like an anvil responded by a single ringing note. *Christianus sum* was all he had to say of his name, city, race, condition, and profession. *Christianus sum* he kept on repeating, till his body, we are told, was a mass of sores and cinders, mangled, shrivelled, and distorted, with hardly a vestige left of the human shape. Maturus a new convert, Attalus a pillar of

Maturus. Attalus.

Alexander Pothinus.

the Church in Pergamos, and Alexander a Phrygian, were equally heroic. The "blessed Pothinus," bowed beneath the weight of more than ninety years, many of which had been spent in the Episcopate at Lyons, showed a dignified serenity worthy of a friend of S. Polycarp and S. John. When asked by the Governor, "Who is the God of the Christians?" he said, "Show thyself worthy, and thou shalt know." After shameful ill-treatment by the mob, he was thrown into prison, where he peacefully expired.

Blandina.

But the glory of this great battle for the Faith seems by unanimous consent to have fallen to the lot of Blandina a poor female slave, whose mistress like herself was among the confessors. The fiendish atrocities inflicted upon this woman are minutely described in the letter written by the survivors. Suffice it to say here, that as her apparent weakness led the heathen to suppose her an easy prey, so her unexpected firmness and almost miraculous vitality provoked their malice to a point of insatiable fury. Every device of cruelty was exhausted upon her and upon her brother, a lad of fifteen years of age. To sustain the courage of this latter seems to have been her principal concern. Amid the horrors of such scenes, it is delightful to observe the reverence and affection with which her heroic struggle was witnessed by her companions. From a feeble slave she was exalted in their eyes into a princess mighty with God, a true mother in Israel. Her presence pervades the good fight of Faith from the beginning to the end.

The lowly exalted.

The confessors who survived bore their honors, we

are told, with meekness and moderation.[3] "They humbled themselves under the mighty Hand by which they had been so honorably exalted. They defended all their brethren who had lapsed, they criminated none: they loosed all, they bound none." The spirit of S. John, it is plain, was still mighty in the Churches.

Good sense of the Confessors.

It needs only to be added that the narrative from which this chapter is taken was written[4] by one of the survivors, and sent to the mother Churches in Asia Minor. The witness unto blood before the heathen was accompanied also with a protest against the new Prophets, probably the Montanists, by whom the peace of the Church had been for some time disturbed. Another letter with the same condemnation of the rising heresy, addressed to Eleutherus, then Bishop of Rome,[5] was sent by the hand of the Presbyter Irenæus, with a testimonial to his character which his subsequent career in the Church proves to have been well deserved.

Their epistle.

The new prophets condemned.

In other parts of Gaul, and in Rome and other cities of Italy, the persecution raged for some time, and added many names to the roll of the Martyrs. It was accompanied more or less by war, pestilence, and famine; in the midst of all which we get but

Troubles elsewhere.

[3] The emphasis laid upon this and similar traits in the letter of the confessors shows that a different spirit had already begun to show itself.

[4] Euseb. v. 1–4.

[5] The phrase here employed—*τῆς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν εἰρήνης ἕνεκα πρεσβεύοντες*—"negotiating for the peace of the Churches"—and the fact that the martyrs in prison had written several letters on the subject, seem to countenance the supposition that Eleutherus was the Bishop mentioned by Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.*) who favored the new prophets. See Valesius ad Euseb. v. 3. There are not facts enough to determine the question; but the statement of Tertullian seems to accord better with the impetuous character of Victor, the successor of Eleutherus.

occasional and unsatisfactory glimpses of the state of Gallic Christianity. About the end of the century another persecution came, and proved still more fatal to the Church in Lyons. But here, as elsewhere, the early proverb was verified, that the more the grass is cut, the more it grows: the more the vine is pruned, the more choice and abundant is the vintage. The blood of the Gallic Martyrs proved to be the seed of an unfailing and increasing harvest.

The pruning of the Vine.

CHAPTER V.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin in search of truth.

JUSTIN, surnamed the Martyr, a title won by his apologetic pen, as well as sealed by his blood in witness of the Truth, was a native of Neapolis a city of Samaria, and probably of heathen parentage. He was born about the beginning of the second century. Tormented from early youth by an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he put himself first under the tuition of a famous Stoic;[1] but finding, upon trial, that the man could teach him nothing with reference to God, and that he rather despised the earnest inquiries of his pupils, he repaired to the school of an able and subtle Professor of Peripatetic wisdom. Him he found, however, to be a worshipper of gold

His teachers.

[1] *Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo.* The slightly romantic tinge of this narrative does not impair its credibility; it merely gives us a better insight into the amiable but earnest character of the martyr. Eusebius makes Ephesus the scene of this Dialogue: iv. 18.

as the *summum bonum*, and indifferent to all truth that had not a marketable value. Justin, therefore, left him in disgust. At length, hearing of a learned Pythagorean, who had the reputation of being quite inaccessible to the charms of money, he determined to throw himself at his feet, and to become, if permitted, one of his disciples. The philosopher seems to have been nothing more than a pompous charlatan. He possessed, however, no little capacity for words, and in the science of his school imagined he had a key to all knowledge, human and divine. "Tell me," says he to the eager aspirant, "are you an adept in music, astronomy, and geometry? For by these sciences alone can you learn to abstract the soul from sensible objects, and fix it in contemplation of what is beautiful in itself." Justin, however, knew little of the stars. Perhaps he cared little for them. God, he felt, was nearer to his soul; and he could put no confidence in a system which professed to seek Him by climbing up into the heights of the physical heavens, or by descending into the deep of laborious intellectual abstractions. Grieved, and sick at heart, therefore, he turned from the Pythagorean, and began to look elsewhere for help in his spiritual need.

Physical science.

His next experience was in connection with some of the followers of Plato. Here he was better satisfied. In the world of richly imaginative and mystic speculation, into which his new teachers introduced him, his soul began to warm and to expand; his mind was at least agreeably occupied; and though his heart was not as yet filled with the knowledge which alone could give it rest, he began to feel, as it were, the budding of the wings which were to lift it

Becomes a Platonist.

above self. Hope, in other words, revived within him. Intoxicated with a vague but delicious sense of spiritual beauty, he seemed to himself to be just upon the verge of the crowning joy. The unrealities of sense were fading from his view, and the vision of true being, nay of God Himself, might open upon him in a moment. So full was he of this expectation, so earnest and real in the midst of a cloud of philosophic dreams, that he determined to withdraw himself entirely from the tumult of the world, and selecting the loneliest spot he could find on the seashore, there to await in silence and meditation the fulfilment of his hopes.

Philosophic dreams.

He meets with an Evangelist

Nor was he disappointed altogether in his confident expectation. He who heareth the young ravens that call upon Him, would not turn a deaf ear to so earnest a seeker as the eager and unselfish Platonician. As Justin walked and mused, within hearing of the multitudinous voices of the sea, he was met by a grave old man of a certain sweetness of expression. The philosopher was charmed. He stopped, and, unconsciously to himself, fixed his eyes eagerly upon the stranger. "Do you know me," said the latter, "that you gaze so earnestly upon me?" "No," answered Justin, "I am only surprised to meet one like you in this solitary place." "I am here," said the stranger, "because my soul is disquieted on account of certain of my friends. They are tossed on the sea, and I am anxious to find them, or hear tidings of them."

A Christian philosopher.

The acquaintance thus mysteriously begun ripened soon into confidence and friendship. Justin discoursed of what was uppermost in his mind, the beauty and the sweetness of true philosophy. To know

what really is, to seek and love the Truth, this, he declared, is the only thing worth living for, the only thing to fill and satisfy the heart. To his surprise he found the stranger more at home on such subjects than himself. Without any scientific pretension he spoke of the nature of God, of the soul, of the true philosophy of life, with a tranquillity and assurance that captivated the ingenuous seeker, and led him finally to the conclusion that if he was to make any progress in heavenly wisdom, he must begin at the lowest round of the ladder, and become a disciple in the school of Jesus Christ.

The School of Christ.

To this, however, he had to be led gradually, the prejudices against Christianity being as gross among the well-instructed heathen as among the rabble, and far more inveterate. His teacher, therefore, was content to introduce him to the Old Testament Scriptures. Struck with the sublimity and beauty of these sacred writings, he studied them with single-hearted earnestness; thus laying the foundation of that hermeneutic skill which he ever afterwards regarded as his *charisma*, or spiritual gift. From the Old he was led easily into the New. The real character of Christianity, and the truth with regard to the life and conversation of its professors, began to dawn upon him. "I had heard much against them," says he, "and shared in the common delusion. But when I considered their courage in encountering death and every other terror, I felt at once that they could not be guilty of the crimes of which they were accused. To a mere voluptuary, to a shameless debauchee, to one who takes delight in eating human flesh, death cannot prove otherwise than terrible; for it puts an end to the gross pleasures in which

Study of the Scriptures.

Prejudices removed.

they spend their life. The Christians, however, welcome death with joy."[2] Considerations of this kind opened the way to inquiry, and inquiry led to satisfaction and conviction.

Justin's calling.

That he ever entered the ministry is extremely doubtful.[3] Indeed, in the absence of any positive proof that he did, it seems more probable that he found his "gift" could be exercised to greater advantage under the garb of a philosopher, and in the freedom of lay life, than amid the confining and pressing duties of the ordinary priesthood. Certain it is, that he visited many countries, and had argumentative discussions both with Jews and Greeks.

Public discussions.

His controversy in Ephesus with Trypho, a learned Jew who had survived the horrors of the insurrection of Bar Cochba, and his two Apologies, addressed, the one to the Emperor Aurelius, and the other to the Roman Senate and People, with some other works or fragments of works, remain to show the way in which these discussions were conducted. Without going into an analysis of any of these writings,[4] it is worth while to notice, that Justin interpreted both Hebrew and Greek learning on the same general principles; finding in both innumerable types or foreshadowings of the truth of the Gospel; and making all earnest thought of all ages, and all races, to centre, as it were, in the incarnate Word, to point towards Him, and in Him to receive its complete and harmonious interpretation. Thus,

Christ in all.

[2] Apol. i.

[3] Tillemont thinks he was a Presbyter—*Mem. pour servir.* vol. 2, part 2,—but on insufficient grounds.

[4] *Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin Martyr:* John (Kaye), Bishop of Lincoln. *Justin. d. Martyrer,* Semisch, translated by Ryland, and published in *Clark's Biblical Cabinet.* Volckmar, *die Zeit ds. Just. M.*

not the Law and the Prophets only, but the Poets and Philosophers, were fulfilled in Christ.

In fact, the Logos, the First-born of God, who is also God, being from all eternity *immanent in God*, but *coming forth from God* for creation, was regarded by Justin as the *seed-light* to the ages that preceded the revelation of the Gospel; so that upright heathen, Socrates for example, were undeveloped believers, being obedient to the light that was in them.[5] On this ground he apologizes for the lateness of the Incarnation. As the first days of the creation had light enough for growth, though destitute as yet of sun and moon and stars, so with the ages, and the races, among which Christ was unrevealed. Justin, therefore, would not deny the good that existed in heathendom; he preferred showing how it pointed to a far greater good. It was somewhat inconsistent with all this, that he ascribed the numerous ceremonies which pagan worship had in common with Christianity, to the malicious *apery* of dæmons; these latter mimicking the truth in order to make it odious.[6] In tracing the unconscious prophecies of heathen poetry and philosophy, or even of heathen oracles, Justin, it must be confessed, is not very critical; quoting oftentimes from works unquestionably spurious, and some of them fabrications of the age in which he lived.

The Seed-light.

In his treatment of matters of faith, and especially in dealing with the great mysteries of the Creed, his orthodoxy in general is beyond all question. As an interpreter, however, to Jews and Greeks, and as

Justin's faith.

[5] The *Logos endiathetos—Logos prophoricos—Logos spermaticos.* See Neander's Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas.

[6] e. g. *Bread and wine* used in the mysteries of Mithras; and *baptisms*, or ablutions, in almost all forms of heathen worship.

one of the earliest who attempted, so to speak, to translate the language of simple faith into the dialect of philosophers and disputers, he is betrayed occasionally into modes of expression, which at a later period would hardly have been considered admissible, or safe. In all cases the phraseology of early writers has to be received with a certain allowance.[7] It could hardly be expected, that the first attempts to give a philosophic or scientific form to truths commonly received in the Church should be entirely conclusive. The wonder is, not that we find some objectionable phrases in the early fathers, or some untenable positions, but that we find so few.

His opinions.

With regard to matters of opinion, or interpretation, Justin fell into some mistakes from too careless a following of the letter of Holy Scripture. He was an advocate of the Millenarian doctrine. From a notion, that the sons of God mentioned in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis were Angels, he favored the absurd hypothesis, that children were begotten by them of the daughters of men, and that the offspring thus begotten became Dæmons of the Gentiles. It is more to his credit, that he departed from a common prejudice of his day, in allowing a possibility of salvation to Jewish Christians[8] who

[7] For example, *creation* and *generation* were for some time more or less confounded. In the tenth chapter of Bishop Kaye's *Writings of Justin Martyr* the reader will find a summary of Justin's views, as illustrated by passages from Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus.

[8] His lenient way of speaking of the Ebionite denial of the divinity of Christ, in the Dialogue with Trypho, viz., "*I do not agree with these,* because I have been taught not to follow men, but the declarations of Christ and the Prophets"—has been regarded by some as indicative of a certain laxness in his views. I should rather infer the reverse. The firmer a man's faith, the better he can afford to use mild language.

conscientiously continued in the observance of the Law.

Religious rites.

As a witness to the religious customs of Christians in his day, Justin speaks with less reserve than was common with early writers, and gives us the most exact information we have: the outline he presents supplying some features of ritual in which Pliny's famous letter is deficient.[9] Judging from his account, neither Baptism nor the Eucharist had received any ceremonial additions to the severe simplicity of Apostolic times. In describing the administration of the Lord's Supper, he seems to have followed the order of the Service now known as that of S. James.[10]

His confession.

The latter portion of his life was spent by the Apologist in Rome, remaining all day at his house near the baths of Timotheus, and conversing freely with those who came to him for instruction or discussion. During this period he incurred the fixed hatred of the Stoic Crescens, whom he handled somewhat roughly in argument, and to whose influence in high quarters he was probably indebted for the Martyr's crown. According to the Acts of his Martyrdom,[11] a piece authenticated by its primitive modesty and simplicity, he was brought, with several other Christians, before the tribunal of Junius Rusticus Prefect of the City, not long before the death of S. Polycarp.[12]

[9] Kaye's *Justin M.* chap. iv. Among the particulars mentioned, we may notice, (1) the doctrine of Baptism and the Eucharist, in which the grace given is much insisted on; (2) the careful preparation (fasting and prayer); (3) the kiss of peace; (4) wine mixed with water in the Eucharist; (5) the bearing of a portion to the absent; (6) separation of the Eucharist from the Love Feast; (7) special observance of Sunday; (8) alms for orphans, widows, &c. *Apolog.* i.

[10] Palmer's *Origines Liturg.* Asseman. *Cod. Liturg.* tom. v.

[11] Given in Baronius; also, in Tillemont.

[12] The dates are uncertain: Polycarp's death is variously stated at 147, 169, 175; Justin's is put as

"Obey the will of the Gods and the commands of the Emperor" was, as usual, the opening of the trial. In Justin's reply, there is little of the sententious brevity or dignified reserve of a Polycarp or Pothinus; nor does he take refuge in the simple *Christianus sum*, that ringing anvil-note of Lyonnese Sanctus: his attitude has more of the dialectician;—a man of faith, indeed, but ready and even eager to give a reason for the faith that is in him. "There is nothing to reprehend in a man, who obeys the commands of our Saviour, Jesus Christ." "But what is your profession," says Rusticus, "to what school do you belong?" "I once strove," he replied, "to become acquainted with every school of philosophy, and to make myself master of every science; but having sought the Truth on all sides without success, I finally embraced the philosophy of the Christians, not considering whether it pleased or displeased the votaries of error." "Wretched man!" cried the Prefect, "you follow that doctrine, then?" "Yes, I follow that doctrine, and with joy, for it shows me the Truth." "But what is Truth?" "The Truth," answered Justin, "is to believe in one God, who created all things visible and invisible, and to confess our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, announced long ago by the Prophets, Who is to come again to judge all men, and Who is the Saviour, as well as the Teacher of His true Disciples. Far be it from me to pretend to speak worthily of His infinite greatness, or of His Divinity. Such a theme belongs rather to the Prophets, who so long before predicted His coming upon earth." The Prefect then asked him, in what place

His creed.

early as 165. I have put Justin *after* Polycarp and Pothinus, merely as belonging to a later period of intellectual culture.

the Christians assembled for their worship. "We assemble where we can," said Justin: "God is not confined to any place. Invisible, he fills the Heavens and the Earth, and the faithful adore Him everywhere: in every place they offer Him the honor and worship due unto His Name."

His companions.

After some further questions, Rusticus addressed himself to the companions of Justin. Carito and Caritina answered, that by the goodness of God they were Christians. Euelpistus said, "I am a slave of Cæsar, but a Christian. Jesus Christ, by His grace, hath made me free." Hierax and Liberianus acknowledged themselves servants and adorers of the only true God. Seeing little chance of making an impression upon these simple folk, and feeling, it may be, more interest in the fate of their accomplished leader, the Prefect turned to Justin once more, and addressed him in a bantering tone: "You are a man with a tongue in your head, and a professor, it would seem, of the genuine philosophy. Tell me, then, I pray, do you really believe, that if I have you scourged from head to foot, you will straightway go up to Heaven?" "Yes," said Justin, "if you have me scourged, I hope to receive the reward promised to all those who keep the commandments of Christ: for I know, that all who live by this rule shall be the friends of God." "You think, then," said the Prefect, "that you are going up to Heaven to be rewarded there?" "Not only do I think it," answered Justin, "but I know it: and that, too, assuredly and beyond all doubt."

His hope.

The examination was followed by the usual command to sacrifice to idols; which the prisoners unani-

Martyrdom.

mously refusing to do, they were scourged,[13] and soon afterwards beheaded.

Scoffing spirit of the heathen.

In this trial, as indeed in all controversies of that day, with Jews or Gentiles, Christianity had to cope with that hard, and keen, and exquisitely polished irony, which is one of the fruits of a merely intellectual civilization, and which to simple faith is the most horrible of all weapons. Men of the school of S. Polycarp avoided it, no doubt, by a holy and dignified reserve. The time was come, however, for a closer and more deadly struggle with the powers of darkness. It is much to Justin Martyr's credit, that in his dialogues, apologies, and discussions generally, he was sufficiently free-spoken, but not unnecessarily harsh or rude. On the contrary, he answers sneers generally with admirable temper; and a love of souls is almost as conspicuous in his writings as a zeal for the Truth. His own very gradual conversion led him to look hopefully upon the various stages of approximate belief and partial knowledge.

Tatian his disciple.

Among his disciples was Tatian, an Assyrian, who wrote with some earnestness in defence of "the philosophy of the barbarians," as he styled the Gospel, but was afterwards led by his austerity of temper into Gnostic errors. The "Epistle to Diognetus," a choice rhetorical production of some Christian Apologist who wrote early in the century, has been ascribed to Justin Martyr, but on no sufficient grounds.

[13] As Justin, it is supposed, had the right of citizenship, the scourging here mentioned throws a shade of doubt upon the genuineness of these acts. But (1) his citizenship is not certain; and (2) even if it were, the Roman Magistrates were not always scrupulous about such rights in the case of Christians.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APOLOGETIC AGE.

End of the century.

THE last third of the second century, the period that followed the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, is uneventful so far as external history is concerned, but full of growing interest with regard to matters of discipline and doctrine.

Melito.

During the reign of Aurelius, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, wrote to the Emperor his Apology for a Faith, which had come in, he urged, with the Empire itself, but was left without redress to the capricious violence of the mob. He was a highly gifted man, and among his contemporaries enjoyed the reputation of a Prophet. He drew up a canon of the Old Testament, containing only the received Books of the Hebrew Scriptures. The variety of subjects on which he wrote[1] is enough to show, that the holy diffidence which had produced so long a spell of silence in the Church at the beginning of the century, was fast giving way before the pressure of the times.

Other Apologists.

Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, wrote an Apology; and was not a little troubled by the rising heresy of Montanus. Of other names indicative of the awakened intellect of the day, it is enough to mention, in this place, Miltiades, an Apologist; Hermias, who ridiculed the paradoxes of the philosophers; Athenagoras an

[1] Euseb. iv. 26.

Athenian philosopher; Theophilus the sixth Bishop of Antioch, who introduced the term *trias;* Tatian a disciple of Justin Martyr, and Bardesanes an elegant writer of Edessa, both of whom fell into Gnostic errors; Musanus, who strove against the plausible error which went under the name of *encraty* or continence; Minucius Felix and Tertullian in North Africa; Irenæus and his disciples; the writers of the Alexandrine School, of whom, as of some others above mentioned, there will be occasion to speak more particularly in another place.[2] The title "Apologetic Age," applied to this period, has to be understood in a large sense; for the controversy with heretics was conducted with even greater vigor than the defence of the Gospel against the heathen.

Heathen opponents.

On the other hand, Heathenism was no longer content to assail the Faith with the weapons of fanatical fury merely, or of a variable state policy. Philosophy was awakened to a sense of its own danger.[3] Crescens and Fronto endeavored by vile calumnies to fortify Aurelius with a valid plea for persecution. Lucian impartially derided all the religions of his times, and found a butt for his satiric humor in the zeal of Martyrs and Confessors. Celsus confounded Christianity with the dreams of Gnostic sects, and, avoiding the ground of vulgar paganism, assailed it, now with the light missiles of Epicurean indifferentism, now with the heavier metal of the Platonic philosophy. As the controversy proceeded,

[2] See Euseb. iv. 21–30; v. 13, 18, 19.

[3] The argument for and against the Gospel, as managed in early times, is accessible to English readers in Reeves's *Apologies* (Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix); also in Bellamy's *Origen against Celsus,* and Humphrey's *Apologetics of Athenagoras.* See, also, Oxford Translations of the Fathers.

the adversaries of the Gospel resorted more and more to this method of attack. On the one hand, the Christian name could be made to cover an ever increasing number of absurd and wicked sects; on the other, philosophy, through the influence of the diffused light of truth, was becoming more intellectual and more spiritual than it had hitherto appeared. The new Platonic School began to flourish in Alexandria towards the end of the century. Ammonius Saccas, one of its first teachers, was acquainted with Christianity. So also was Plotinus, and at a later period Porphyry, the latter of whom was hostile to the Gospel in proportion as he drew from it his noblest and best thoughts.

New Platonic school.

But philosophers of this kind belonged to an intellectual oligarchy, and had little influence with the people. They were also wonderfully superstitious.[4] The wonder-working life of Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of the Apostles, was rescued from oblivion by rhetoricians of this school, adorned with a profusion of unmeaning miracles, and set up as an embodiment of the philosophic perfect man. A strict vegetable diet, a pure Attic style, a sententious utterance of common places, an attempt to relieve

Apollonius of Tyana.

[4] Porphyrius *de Vita Plotini*, found in Fabricii *Bibliothec. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. 26. Plotinus professed to have a god for his familiar; which was proved when a certain Egyptian priest of Isis attempted to call up the dæmon of Plotinus; for instead of a dæmon a god suddenly appeared. *Vita. Plotin.* cap. 10. On the strength of this, when one of his disciples invited him to go with him and worship the gods, Plotinus answered, "They should come to me, not I to them." With all these pretensions, his high favor with Gallienus and the Empress could not obtain for him the gift of a ruined city in Campania, to establish a Platonic commonwealth: cap. 12. The Christians gloried, therefore, that while Platonic wisdom had never succeeded in founding a single town, the words of a few fishermen were becoming a law to the whole world. On the new Platon. Sch. see Degerando, *H. de la Phil.*

heathen worship of some of its grosser abominations, a profound contempt for the unenlightened many, and an appreciation of the maxim that knowledge is power, are prominent features of the ideal thus constructed in opposition to Christianity. According to them, the true sages dwell, surrounded with a cloud and armed with superhuman resources, on a height inaccessible to the common herd. The soul lives after death separate from the body, but of its ultimate destiny it is unwise to inquire. Such was the lesson of the Life of Apollonius.[5] The poverty of this performance, as compared with the matchless Life recorded in the four Gospels, shows that Christianity had little to fear from the rivalry of philosophers.

The ideal man.

In the meanwhile, the Church had a season of comparative immunity from political persecution. The Emperor Aurelius, moved by a Providential deliverance of his army from the Quadi and Marcomanni,[6] which the Christians ascribed to the prayers of certain soldiers of their own in the "Thundering Legion," became, at length, weary of a fruitless persecution, and issued a severe edict against informers. That the event referred to awakened a religious feeling in the mind of the Emperor, there can be no doubt. It seems equally certain that his own thanks

Legio fulminea.

[5] *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, translated by the Rev. Edward Berwick. The miracles of Apollonius (as Newman shows in his *Apollon. Tyan.*) are mere juggling wonders, without dignity and without meaning. After his death, his *ghost* appeared to a young disciple, but gave him no information.

[6] The story is given in Eusebius, v. 5. The name *Legio Fulminea* was older, however, than the alleged event; and Tertullian's account is qualified by the word "perhaps" — "Christianorum *forte* militum." See Gieseler, § 42, n. 5, and Neander's *Ch. Hist.* i. 1.

were rendered to Jupiter Pluvius. It may easily have been, however, that, his mind being restored for the time being to something of its early child-like faith,[7] he looked more indulgently upon religious fervor in general, and was therefore disposed to be more tolerant of the peculiar zeal of the Christians. For it was the *lively faith* of the Church, rather than its doctrinal system, that seems hitherto to have moved his hatred.

Commodus, A. D. 180–192.

Commodus, whose atrocities sprang from personal caprice rather than from any political or religious principle, was in the main not unfavorable to Christians; and Marcia, his mistress, whom he honored almost as an Empress, used her influence in their behalf. Notwithstanding all this, there were martyrs not a few in this reign. Apollonius, a literary man and philosopher of Rome, a Senator by rank, was condemned on the testimony of a slave, and beheaded, after a noble apology before that stronghold of heathenism, the distinguished body to which he belonged. At the same time, the law bearing on the subject being administered with singular impartiality, the wretch who accused him was also put to death.

Apollonius a martyr.

Septimius Severus, A. D. 192–211.

Septimius Severus, it is said,[8] had been healed of a sore disease by a Christian of the name of Proculus, afterwards a member of his household; and had ap-

[7] In the mind of Aurelius, early religious feeling had to struggle against a hard crust of stoic fatalism. It was in this latter spirit that he declared; "Whosoever shall do any thing *to disturb the minds of men with fear of the divine power* . . . let him be banished," etc.; or, "Whosoever shall bring in novel religions . . . by which the *souls of men may be troubled*, let him," . . . etc. He hated any thing fervid or moving in Religion. For an account of his religious character, (perhaps too favorable,) see Neander's *Ch. History*.

[8] Tertull. *ad Scap.* iii. 4.

pointed a Christian nurse for his son Antoninus. If not actually favorable to the Church, he was at least indisposed to molest it. But about the middle of his reign he found it necessary, as he thought, to prohibit the further spread of the Gospel. Proselyting was forbidden both to the Jews and Christians. Finding, however, that in spite of his decrees the tide continued to rise, the Emperor was at length induced to countenance more active measures. The storm that ensued fell with most severity upon Palestine and Egypt; but was felt also in North Africa, Rome, and many other portions of the Church. From certain expressions of Tertullian[9] it may be doubted whether Severus himself was actively concerned in this persecution. It was enough that he allowed it. The cruelty of the mob, the complaisance or cupidity of magistrates, and the hostility of Jews, heathen, and philosophers, would easily do the rest. For to other causes of persecution it began now to be added, that there were Christians wealthy and weak enough to purchase for themselves an exemption from martyrdom. Without sacrificing to idols or burning incense, they might procure a certificate to the effect that they had done so, and might thus remain unmolested. These were called *Libellatici;* a class that figures largely in the history of Church discipline during the third century.

Sixth Persecution.

Libellatici.

Whole communities, it is said, procured exemption

[9] Blunt's *Lectures on the Church of the first three centuries:* Mosheim's *Commentaries.* Tertullian (*Apologet.* i. 5 and *ad Scap.* iii. 4) is anxious to make out that no good Emperor persecuted the Christians, and no really good magistrate; but that the rabble and wicked men were responsible. He therefore strains a point in favor of Marcus Aurelius, Severus and others. His language, however, merely proves that these Emperors were *sometimes* favorable to the Christians.

in this way. It was a kind of evasion as impolitic as it was unjustifiable on moral grounds.[10] For it not only created a new motive for persecution, but it surrounded Christians at all times with a crowd of greedy spies and informers, who made a livelihood out of their fears and kept them in a state of perpetual torture.

Peace of thirty-eight years, A.D. 211-249.

Some of the particulars of this persecution will come up incidentally in connection with events hereafter to be mentioned. It was followed by a calm of thirty-eight years, interrupted only by a brief and cruel outbreak under Maximin the Thracian, which is reckoned as the seventh of the general persecutions. During this interval of peace, the sun-worshipper Elagabalus wished to blend Christianity as well as the religion of Jews and Samaritans, with the superstitious worship paid to his god.[11] Alexander Severus, influenced by his half-Christian mother Julia Mammæa, was disposed to admit Christ to equal honors in the sacrifices offered to Abraham, Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana.[12] Philip the Arabian was still more favorable to Christianity; and it was very generally thought that intellectually, at least, he was a believer.[13]

A. D. 235-238.

Trials from within.

But, as already intimated in the beginning of this chapter, the favor or disfavor of princes, and the presence or absence of external persecutions, were no

[10] A worse evasion (*Can. of Ancyra*, i.) was, by a previous understanding with the magistrates, to undergo a mere *sham* torture, or threats of torture, without being placed in any real danger. Shifts of this sort made the Christians more careful in insisting upon actual scars, or mutilations, on the part of those who claimed to be confessors.

[11] Lampridius in *Heliogab.* 3.

[12] Lamprid. in *S. Alex.*, 22, 28, 29, 43, 45, 49.

[13] Euseb. vi. 34, 36. His conversion is elaborately discussed, and disproved, in Pagi *Breviarium Pontific.* etc. *S. Fabianus.*

longer the most prominent of the trials of the Church. There were difficulties from within, far more formidable. What these were, how they were encountered, and by what means and to what extent they were finally vanquished, shall be the special theme of the remaining chapters of this Book.

CHAPTER VII.

HERESIES AND SCHOOLS.

The Church free.

THE twofold struggle between the Gospel and the Law, and between Faith and a false Gnosis, had been in its main elements, and so far as it was a contest for supremacy within the Church, substantially decided long before the departure of the last of the Apostles. In doctrine, discipline, and worship, the Church was free to take her own course; having a creed, a polity, and divinely taught sacraments of her own, with liberty in building thereupon to avail herself of what elements of natural religion she might find to accord with this foundation, whether sanctioned or not by Judaic prejudices. In the same way with regard to the Gnostics, it was perfectly understood that theirs was a "Gnosis falsely so called." In developing, therefore, a Gnosis, or religious science of her own, the Church regarded Gnostic principles with horror and aversion. By the end of the first century she was Anti-Jewish and Anti-Gnostic in heart, and mind, and confession.

Neither Jewish nor Gnostic.

Hence, Judaizing Christians soon drew off into

obscure, and, so far as the body of the Church was concerned, uninfluential sects. In the great cities, however, and among the mixed multitudes, half Christian half Heathen, the leaven of the circumcision was still powerful enough to foment factions and divisions. The Nazarenes and Ebionites, mentioned in the first Book of this history, flourished chiefly in Palestine. I. Judaist Sects.

The Clementine Homilies,[1] so called, remain to the present day as proof of a very ingenious effort made towards the end of the second century, to fall back upon a pretended *primitive religion;* a "house of wisdom," as it were, of which Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, should be the "seven pillars," Christ also being acknowledged as greatest of them all. This system was remarkable for a full-blown doctrine of papal supremacy;[2] James of Jerusalem, however, being placed at its head. To the Judaic elements of the system there was added a Gnostic theory of emanations in pairs. These Clementines express the sentiments of the Elxaite school, but were probably revamped by some philosophic Roman, in the interest of one or other of the Judaizing factions which troubled the great city. The Clementines.

Hippolytus gives us more precise information of the *Elxaites*, a Judaic Gnostic sect, a branch of which came to Rome during the pontificate of Callistus.[3] They made Christ the male, and the Holy Elxaites, (about) A. D. 220.

[1] Clementis Roman. *quæ feruntur Homiliæ*, etc., Gott. 1853. See Gieseler, § 58; Schaff, § 69.

[2] Clement addresses James as "the lord, and bishop of bishops, ruler of the holy Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem, and of the Churches of God established everywhere."

[3] S. Hippolyti *Refut. Omn. Hæresium*, lib. ix. 13. The state of the Roman Church, and the position of Hippolytus towards the Bishops of the city, are more

Ghost the female, in a series of successive manifestations or incarnations. They were ascetic in their habits, but differed from most ascetics by enjoining early marriage as a duty, and condemning virginity. To that numerous class of Christians, whose consciences were troubled by the sense of post-baptismal sins, or who were undergoing Church discipline, they offered an attractive bait in a new baptism with plenary absolution, to be repeated as often as required. This baptism was made extremely solemn and impressive. The candidate "was immersed in the Name of the Most High, and of His Son the Great King, and with invocation of the *seven Witnesses*, sky and water, and holy spirits, and prayer-angels, and oil, and salt, and earth." In the name of these they were to renounce all past and future sin. The gospel of these Elxaites, "Be converted and baptized *cum toto vestitu*,"[4] was an offer of free, immediate, and unconditional pardon to all sinners of every sort; and, at a time when the Church required a long catechumenal probation before baptism, and a tedious and severe penance for sins committed after, it must have proved a formidable rival to the orthodox faith. In addition to this, there were pretensions to supernatural powers; a secret doctrine imparted only to the initiated; great reverence for the Sabbath; and an affectation of severity and simplicity of manners. Hippolytus complains that Callistus paved the way for this heresy by his lax administration of the discipline of the Church. It is

Baptisms.

Laxity of discipline.

fully treated in ii. 9, and iii. 4, of this History.

[4] For baptism in the Church, candidates had to be divested of their clothing—putting off the old and putting on the new. The opposite custom of the Elxaites was probably meant to signify, that they were ready to receive sinners *just as they were.*

more probable, that the activity of Sects of this kind, and the attractions they held out to the mixed multitude of half-believers, rendered a strict enforcement of the canons practically impossible. In the same way, their elaborate and significant ceremonial may have had an influence upon the development of ritual in the Church.

II. Gnosticism.

Men who started with the assumption common to all the philosophers of antiquity,[5] that *evil inheres in matter*, could not regard matter or the material world as a creature of the supreme and only good God. Either it must be eternal, or it must be the work of an evil power, or it must be the rubbish, so to speak, that remained after the framing of the spiritual *pleroma*, or it must be the result of some negligence or accident with which the one absolute and true Being had nothing at all to do. Hence the main effort of Gnostic speculations. The material world and the evil that clings to it must be removed as far as possible from that unfathomable and silent Deep, the Fountain of all good. Endless genealogies must be framed,[6] of

God and the world.

[5] Even Plato: See Gieseler, § 44, notes 1–5. The tenets of the Gnostic sects belong to the history of philosophy, rather than of religion. The ancient writers on the subject are brought together in the *Corpus Hæresiologicum*, Franciscus Oehler, Berolini. There is quite a full account of early heresies in the *History of the Church*, &c., by Jeremie and others; and an excellent digest in Dr. Schaff's History, and in Robertson's *H. of Ch.*

[6] The following are the principal points of the system: (1) the primal Being—*Buthos*, the Abyss—*Sige*, Silence—or even ὁ οὐκ ὤν, nonentity; (2) *pleroma*—the living sphere of *æons*, or spiritual emanations; (3) *kenoma*—the void that lies beyond that sphere; (4) *demiurgus*—the world-creator; (5) *hyle*—matter; (6) *pneumatic, psychic, hylic*—spiritual, sensuous, material souls. From Christianity they borrowed the idea of a Saviour. *Dualism* is well defined by Plato: "Not by one soul merely is the world moved, but by several perhaps, or at all events by not less than two; of which the one is beneficent, the other the opposite, and a framer of the opposite; besides which, there is also a third somewhere between, not senseless, nor irra-

Æon ystem.

angels, *æons*, or emanations, issuing singly or in pairs through a descending, widening and deteriorating scale; till at length, in the dim twilight beyond the outermost circle of the *pleroma*, on the border of light and darkness, good and evil, being and no being, we find the *Demiurgus* blindly working: "the nether intelligence," the offspring of the lowest æon, the ruler of the darkness, the architect of this material world constructing out of "emptiness" and "nothingness" a huge prison-house; wherein the lowest and fallen æon, the feeblest ray of the world of light, groans and struggles for deliverance, finding an articulate voice in the "spiritual" soul of man. For

The lost sheep.

the recovery of this "lost sheep," Christ the Saviour, an æon of the highest order, comes down into the world. As He glides through the æon-circles He forms to Himself a body of ethereal elements; or on His arrival unites Himself for a while to the earthly body of Jesus; or, abhorring all communion with matter, assumes a *docetic* or apparitional body. Once on earth, He becomes through the Holy Spirit the light-centre of the world. To Him all "spiritual" souls are drawn by the *gnosis* which He gives them;[7] "material" or *hylic* souls gravitate towards matter; "psychic" souls, Jews or ordinary Christians, hover betwixt the two. At length, in one way or another,

Salvation by Gnosis.

the lost ray of supernal light being extricated from the slough or prison-house of matter, and united to the highest æon in an everlasting wedlock, the *pleroma* is rounded off into a complete and consistent whole;

tional, nor without self-motion, but touching upon both of the twain, yet always longing for the better, and following after it." The Persians called the good *Oromuzd*, the evil *Ahriman*, and the intermediate *Mithras*.

[7] This gnosis they represented as a secret tradition, communicated only to the initiated few.

matter, or the *kenoma*, finally disappears; and a transcendental life, flowing with equal pulse from the centre to the circumference, or back again from the circumference to the centre, diffuses an unmixed and superabundant joy.

The Demiurge.

Such, in a general way, was the scheme upon which the Gnostics labored; each particular workman, however, fashioning it according to his own fancy, and adorning it with his own pomp of great swelling words. In all its forms, the Demiurge was identified with the God of the Old Testament. Whether He and His works were to be treated as simply evil, or impotently vacillating between the evil and the good, would be determined by the extent to which Eastern *dualism* was admitted into the system. For on the dualistic scheme matter was not a mere void, it was an active principle of evil; and the world, in the same way, was not a mere prison-house, but the battle-ground, as it were, between the two rival kingdoms of light and darkness.

Dualism.

Gnostic morals.

In the same way, while all Gnostics agreed to despise the body, those who held to the dualistic belief were in general the most earnest; and took part in the fierce struggle between the two kingdoms by rushing into the extreme of Oriental asceticism. The Hellenic Gnostics were more indulgent, or more ingenious; and left the flesh to destroy itself by following its own will. The filthiness into which some of these wretches sank, could have flowed from nothing short of demoniacal possession. It was somewhat inconsistent with their contempt for the world and for the body, that they recognized in things below an image or adumbration of the supersensuous sphere; so that, to attain any knowledge of the

world of truth, one has to go up along the path of sense and sight. On this principle, both nature and the Scriptures were allegorized, but in a purely arbitrary manner.

Gnostic cultus.

So far as Gnosticism was consistent, it was too speculative and "spiritual" to be bound by creeds, scriptures, sacraments, or any thing external.[8] As it aimed at influence, however, it had to accommodate itself to the "psychical" element in man. Hence it copied more or less of the ritual of the Church. It had a water baptism for the "psychical," a baptism of the Spirit for the "spiritual." The Lord's Supper was rejected by some, because, says S. Ignatius, they believed not in the "flesh" or Incarnation of the Lord; and celebrated with much pomp and with blasphemous additions, by others. In fact, while a few speculative minds might be content with that Gnosis, which they regarded as the sum of all worship, others more eager to gain proselytes would resort to every art to win the attention and the favor of the sensuous multitude. Gnosis, as a philosophy, therefore, is to be distinguished from Gnosis as a religion. In the former aspect, it was a grand but futile effort to fuse fact and fable, poetry and mythology, philosophy and science, magic and religion, into one consistent whole, which should satisfy the spiritual as well as the intellectual wants of man, and solve the deep questions which so far neither religion nor philosophy had been able to answer. This was attempted by a process of intuition, so called, which was in fact nothing more than guessing.

Two Baptisms.

Gnosis as a philosophy.

Its merits.

[8] For the Gnostic cultus, see Neander's Church History.

Whatever praise, therefore, can be accorded to fanciful and ingenious guessing, the better class of Gnostics more or less deserve. But as an offset to this merit, they originated nothing in morals, religion, philosophy, science, or literature, that has stood the test of time; they constructed nothing that has been able to hold together.[9] If it be admitted that they were the profoundest and most brilliant, it must be conceded also that they were the most barren, of all the heretics of antiquity.

Influence negative.

Arising, as they did, at a time when the intellect of the Church was just awakening to a consciousness of its strength,—moving moreover in the literary sphere, and abounding in bold assertions and brilliant generalizations,—they bore undoubtedly a most portentous aspect to minds of an imaginative and philosophic turn; and in this way we can account for the attention given to them by so many of the most distinguished early Christian writers. But behind all this there was little of real earnestness or power. The system, on the whole, was merely an expiring effort of philosophic and poetic paganism, exhibiting the brilliant colors of the dolphin as it dies. It was the morning mist, as it were, the fog that had settled upon the world during the long night of heathen darkness, breaking up into gorgeous clouds before the Sun of Christianity, reflecting in varied hues the

Morning clouds.

[9] Dr. Schaff, while he seems to blame the Fathers for representing it as "an unintelligible congeries of puerile absurdities and impious blasphemies," yet grants it to be a system in which "monstrous nonsense and the most absurd conceits are chaotically mixed up with profound thoughts and poetical intuitions." The fathers say the same; only they ascribe the "profound thoughts and poetical intuitions" to the old philosophers and poets from whom they were borrowed, and give the Gnostics credit only for the "monstrous nonsense." See Degerando, *H. de la Phil.* xx., xxi.

light before which it fled, and, it may be added, carrying off along with it much of the miasma with which the spiritual atmosphere had been so long infected. For the contest with Gnosticism was of no little service to the Church. Christians did not love the Old Testament less, when they found that Gnostics abhorred it. Nor did the continued assaults upon the Incarnation, or the Creed, or upon the authority of one portion or another of the New Testament, render them less zealous in the defence of those sacred trusts. In the same way, Gnostic austerities made the Church look more sharply to the grounds of ascetic tendencies within her own pale. The great principle, in short, that there is one good God who hath made all things good, so that, as S. Ignatius expressed it, even bodily acts are spiritual if done in the Spirit, was more deeply stamped into Christian consciousness from the fact that these versatile and pretentious heretics so unanimously denied it.

Benefit to the Church.

To this it may be added, that their claim to a peculiar *gnosis* or science, distinguished from simple *faith*, made the development of Christian theology a matter of necessity.[10] The false gnosis could be refuted effectually, only by confronting it with a genuine gnosis. On the other hand, the Gnostics corrupted heathenism. By putting metaphysical abstractions, such as *mind*, *word*, *thought*, *wisdom*, *power*, *justice*, *peace*, in the place of the old nature-gods of the theogonies, they perverted good poetry into a dry and unintelligible jargon; and stripped Polytheism of that sensuous beauty which was its

Positive influence.

[10] Neander, *History of Dogmas.*

principal attraction. The Neo-Platonic school fell into the same mistake. The poetic mythology was at least true to nature: that is, to a fallen and corrupt nature. The philosophic mythologies of Gnostics and Neo-Platonists were true to nothing. In helping, therefore, to expose the absurdities of the older systems, they awakened a critical sense by which their own absurdities were exploded with the rest.

III. Gnostic Sects.

Of particular sects, those which had most of the Greek element, were most unreal, and on the whole most inclined to Antinomianism. Simon Magus, Menander, and Cerinthus have been mentioned among the heretics of the first century.

Alexandrian Gnostics.

In the second century, Carpocrates, who probably taught in Alexandria about the time of the Emperor Hadrian, made his æon-system a cloak for incredible abominations.[11] His son Epiphanes died young, and was worshipped as a god. Of the same sort with the Carpocratians were the Antitactes, Prodicians, and many others.

Basilides, A. D. 125.

Basilides and Valentinus, both Alexandrians, were far more intellectual, and framed systems remarkable for brilliant but perverse ingenuity.[12] There *is a God who is not*, and of whom nothing can be said. There is a *world-seed*, a great egg as it were, containing within it the germs of a spiritual, psychical, and material development. From this, developed according to numerical proportions, come the Ogdoad and

[11] "*Community and equality*," (i. e., community of goods, of wives, of every thing) they represented to be "*the true divine law*, human laws put asunder what God hath put together." Clemens Alex. *Stromat.* iii.

[12] For an excellent account of the tenets and different sects of the Alexandrian Gnostics, see "Some Account of the Writings and Opinions of *Clement of Alexandria*, by John Bishop of Lincoln."

Hebdomad, with their respective Archons, or world-rulers, and the Abraxas, or three hundred and sixty-five Heavens: this latter representing God, so far as He is manifested. Christ is the *nous* or highest æon, which united itself to the man Jesus at His baptism; in memory of which the followers of Basilides celebrated the baptism as *the Epiphany* on the sixth of January. The later Basilideans adopted the views of the Docetæ, and held it lawful to deny the Name of Christ. They were also grossly immoral, and were much addicted to magic, attributing a sovereign efficacy to their abraxas gems.

Valentinus, A. D. 125-140.

Valentinus, the most ingenious of all the Gnostics, made his æons emanate in pairs. His Christ was apparitional or docetic, coming into the world through Mary as water through a pipe.

Marcosians.

The sects that sprang from these leaders, especially the infamous Marcosians, were a disgrace to humanity, and brought no little scandal upon the Christian name.

Ophites.

The Ophites, or Naassenes, got their name from the Ophis, Serpent,—regarding the Serpent that tempted Eve as a symbol of Sophia, Wisdom, or of Christ Himself.[13] Their peculiarities gave occasion to the Heathen to accuse Christians of serpent worship.

Sethites, Cainites.

A similar blasphemy of Scripture was found among the Sethites, Cainites, and others of the same sort. The world and its order being evil, every thing that helps to destroy the world or confound its order was regarded as the struggle of the imprisoned celestial spark. Hence even the Sodomites and Judas Iscariot were by some held in religious honor.

[13] Or, according to others, *Sophia* was the defective female mind. For interesting remarks on these Sects, see Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, vol. i. p. 35.

The Syrian or Oriental Gnostics were more decidedly dualistic in their views, and perhaps more hostile to the Old Testament. Syrian Gnostics.

In their practice they were rigidly ascetic. Saturninus was the name best known among them. His followers, to avoid all contact with the evil principle or with the race of evil men, abstained from marriage and the eating of flesh. A particular interest attaches to the name of Bardesanes of Edessa, once a Christian philosopher and an able defender of the Truth. He believed in two eternal principles, derived evil from matter, and denied the Resurrection. He obtained honor, however, as a confessor; and many of his writings, especially his elegant treatise on Fate, were highly esteemed in the Church. Saturninus. Bardesanes.

Cerdo, a Syrian who came to Rome early in the century, seems to have found a starting-point for his heresy in the effort to reconcile the Old Testament and the New. "The God proclaimed by Moses and the Prophets could not be the Father of Jesus Christ. For the former is known, but the latter unknown: the former is just, merely, the latter is good."[14] Cerdo.

Marcion, a native of Pontus, came to Rome during the episcopate of Anicetus, and adopted the same general views with Cerdo, maturing them, however, into a more advanced doctrine and discipline. Besides the difference between the God of the Old Testament and of the New,[15] he found it impossible to reconcile Christ coming to Judgment, with the Christ of the Gospels; and therefore was accused of making two Christs. As converts from his sect were Marcion.

[14] S. Hippol. *Omn. Hæres.* etc.

[15] "The just Creator, and the good God."

rebaptized on coming into the Church, it is probable that he did not use the common form of Baptism. He rejected the New Testament, except a corrupted copy of the Gospel of S. Luke, and certain portions of the Epistles. It is said that towards the end of his life he repented of his heresy.

Apelles. Apelles, a disciple of Marcion, taught that Christ in descending from on high framed a body to Himself out of the four elements, of which in ascending again He became divested. This he learned from Philumena, a virgin *clairvoyante*, who lived on invisible food and had many revelations. About the end

Hermogenes. of the century, Hermogenes, a painter of Carthage, taught the eternity of matter: an unplastic material, out of which God formed, as perfectly as its stubborn nature would allow, the soul and body of man.[16]

Tatian. Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, travelled in the East after the death of his master, and originated the stern sect of the Tatianites. He regarded marriage as a corruption, and denied the possibility of Adam's salvation.

To these, and many such like, Hippolytus adds the

Monoïmus. name of Monoïmus, an Arabian, who taught that "man is the all," and "the principle of all." His maxim was; "Seek not God, or nature, or things thereunto pertaining; but seek thyself from thyself, and say: My God is my mind, my thought, my soul, my body. Thus thou shalt find thyself in thyself, as the one and the whole."

IV. Mani. It was in the latter half of the third century that Gnostic dualism was moulded into its severest form by the hand of Mani, an apostate Presbyter it is

[16] For several of these see Tertull. *de Praescript.* 30–33.

said, who having been a Magian, a Christian, and possibly a Buddhist, endeavored to fuse all these systems into one. This world is a battle-ground, a confused struggle of darkness and light; the debatable land, as it were, of two great worlds, each having its own Lord, and for ever arrayed in irreconcilable hostility to one another.[17] Each man is an image of that world-wide struggle. In a body which is darkness he has a soul which is darkness, but a soul of light, also, striving for deliverance. Christ and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of light and the Spirit of ether, attract the good soul unto themselves. These notions, adorned with poetical ascriptions to the sun, and moon, and stars, and with a world-system of the most intricate description, were accompanied with terribly serious views of the malignity of nature, and with an austerity dark and hard, though not devoid of a certain moral grandeur. The mouth, the hands, the heart, every member and every faculty, must be sealed.[18] By silence from all but good words, by abstinence from all but vegetable diet, by hands unstained with money, by a virginity absolutely unsullied, the flesh is to be purged, and

The two Kingdoms

Austere views of nature.

Senses sealed.

[17] Zoroaster, a contemporary of Darius Hystaspes, was the reformer of the Magian system. In the form he gave it, *Ormuzd*, the light-principle, and fountain-head of good, and *Ahriman*, the source of darkness and of evil, were eternally generated by the infinite and almighty Essence, *Zeruane*, *Akurene*, or absolute Time. On the subject of the Barbarian Philosophies, see *Diogenes Laertius* among the Ancients, and Tenneman's *Manual of the History of Philosophy* (translated by Cousin) among modern works: also Faber on *Pagan Idolatry*. The innumerable points which Christianity has in common with Anti-Christian systems, are industriously brought together in a spirit hostile to all religion by Dunlap, *Vestiges of the Spirit History of Man*.

[18] "Signaculum oris, signaculum manuum, signaculum sinus." With these high pretensions they mixed secret abominations, almost incredible. See Augustin. *de Hæres*, cap. 46.

the soul of light liberated from its loathsome dungeon. To make these maxims more effectual, the Manicheans had a discipline and worship modelled on that of the Church, but more severe, and in some respects more imposing.[19]

There was in this heresy, as in all that have been built upon an honest reception of the dualistic prin-
Vitality. ciple, an extraordinary vitality. Soon after Mani's death, in the last quarter of the third century, it began to make its way towards the West; and by its ascetic rigor, its high pretensions, and its affectation
A. D. 287. of mystery, made converts not a few in Asia Minor, Italy, Sicily and North Africa. Towards the end of the same century it was prominent enough to provoke persecution, at the hand of the Emperor Diocletian.[20] Persecuted and crushed at various times, it always managed to revive; and in one shape or another continued to exist all through the middle ages.

V. Sensuous Bias. In the meanwhile there was growing within the bosom of the Church a more dangerous enemy, though not more wicked, than either the Judaic or Gnostic heresies. These two, appealing to pseudo-spiritual or pseudo-rational proclivities, had assailed the real Humanity or proper Divinity of our Lord; so that the success of either would have involved no less than a denial of the essentials of Christian faith. The contest with them, however, was during the

[19] Beausobre: *Histoire du Manichéisme:* on which see Mosheim's Criticisms; *Hist. Comment.* vol. ii.

[20] Diocletian's edict (Gies. § 61, n. 19) seems to have been prompted in great measure by hatred of the Persians, whose "detestable customs," he feared, might "corrupt the innocency and simplicity of Roman manners." The ringleaders of the heresy were to be "cast into the flames and burned, along with their abominable writings."

second century an external war. The internal struggle, during the same period, was with enemies that appeared on the *sensuous* side of religion, and appealed to the imaginative faith and emotional feelings, rather than to the sober reason of the times.

Sect spirit.

Symptoms of this, it has been already noticed, had early appeared among the Corinthian Christians, in an over-estimate of charisms, or spiritual gifts. Coveting sensible signs of the operation of the Spirit, and despising the common-place virtues of temperance, charity, and humility, they became mere babes in Christ; and sect-spirit, or schism, one of the inevitable fruits of a carnal mind,[21] became—and to judge from S. Clement's Epistle for a long time continued—a characteristic of their Church.

Love of wonders.

What happened among the Corinthians must have shown itself at times in other places. Love of the marvellous is natural to man. But the extraordinary effusion of "gifts" in the Pentecostal age, however necessary it was for a time, could not but be attended with the risk of ministering to this dangerous passion; giving occasion to disorders, which the rulers of the Church had to combat with all their might.

Chiliast doctrine.

In the beginning of the second century, the same carnal or psychical tendency appears under another form. As miracles became less frequent, and "gifts" almost disappeared, prophecy grew more precious to those who sought either to stimulate or to build up their faith; and the magnificent imagery of the Old and New Testaments, so elevating and inspiring to sober minds, was converted by the unlearned and

[21] Gal. v. 19, 20.

unstable into a sensuous snare. The Millenarian theory, a harmless and pleasing speculation to some, became to others a sort of intoxication. In its milder form it was an opinion, founded on a literal interpretation of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, that *the saints risen from the dead at the first resurrection should reign with Christ a thousand years on earth, in a state of temporal power and felicity.* Papias, a disciple of S. John and a great collector of oral traditions, but a man of slender wit according to Eusebius, embellished this opinion with fanciful additions of a very exceptionable kind. The wicked were to serve the righteous during the thousand years of their reign. To support its enormous population, the earth was to be endowed with a marvellous fecundity. Each vine was to bear a thousand branches, each branch a thousand clusters, each cluster a thousand bunches of grapes, and each grape was to yield twenty-five measures of wine.[22] Pomps, and splendors, and luxuries were to abound in similar proportions. Jerusalem was to be rebuilt. Indeed, the vision of the sacred city, radiant with every im-

Millennial Reign.

New Jerusalem.

[22] See Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i. The doctrine was held, but probably in a more spiritual sense than here described, by Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Melito, and probably by a majority of the Church teachers of the second century. The Alexandrine School, which in the third century brought it into disrepute, were averse to its sensuous character (which they probably exaggerated), but spiritualized the text of Scripture into a very intangible meaning. The millennium was advocated by Justin M., and probably by others, from a desire to bring out clearly *the doctrine of the Resurrection*, in opposition to those "not really Christians," who taught that "at the moment of death the soul would be taken right up into heaven." He therefore contended, that "not only would there be a resurrection of the dead, but a millennium in Jerusalem . . . as all the prophets have predicted." *Dial. cum Tryphon.* 80. It has been well remarked, that as belief in the millennium declined, the notion of a *purgatory* took its place. See note on this subject to Oxf. Trans. of Tertullian, p. 120.

aginable splendor, so impressed itself upon popular imagination, that, as some believed, it was actually seen for a space of forty days[23] hovering in the air just over its future site.

Religious fiction.

But the Millenarian dream, tolerated for awhile among Catholics, and spreading in grosser forms among the heretical Sects, was only one of innumerable symptoms of a great and growing disorder. A worse sign still was the flood of religious fictions let loose upon the Church at this period. Many of these productions were harmless enough, some were even edifying. The Shepherd of Hermas, for example, notwithstanding some questionable phrases, is evidently the work of a pious man, who avails himself of the garb of fiction without any intention to deceive.[24] We can hardly say as much for the Sibylline Books;[25] a forgery which Justin Martyr and early writers generally appealed to, without suspicion or misgiving. The Clementines, a romance already mentioned in this chapter, came out of a great nest of similar productions. Thousands of pious frauds, in short, Prophecies, Histories, Epistles, Gospels, Apocalypses, Testaments, mostly of heretical origin,[26] but ascribed to Adam, Seth, Abraham, Moses, the Apostles, the blessed Virgin, and to various other worthies, Jewish, Christian and Heathen, circulated through innumerable obscure channels, and minis-

Spurious writings.

[23] Tertull. *adv. Marcion.* iii. 25.

[24] This work, and the Epistle of Barnabas, are placed on very good authority in the first century: the argument against their early origin being of no great force. See Gieseler, *Church Hist.* § 35 (Smith's Am. ed.). See, also, Lee *on Inspiration;* and Wake's *Apostol. Fathers.*

[25] *Sibyllina Oracula,* etc., Servatii Gallæi, etc., etc. Amstelodami, 1689.

[26] Epiphanius mentions as many as six thousand, of Gnostic authorship. Irenæus speaks of them as countless.

tered to the fleshly enthusiasm from which they sprang.

The Encratites.

To perils of this kind must be added a growing fondness for the ascetic or encratite[27] virtues. Virginity could not long be content with the qualified praise bestowed upon it by S. Paul. Second marriages were allowed to human infirmity, but, in an age that called for extraordinary and heroic virtues, infirmity was not apt to be regarded with particular favor. The martyr spirit[28] was immoderately applauded: on the other hand, denial of the faith at the hour of trial, and even attempts at evasion, were likely to be considered by many unpardonable sins.

Excesses rebuked.

Excesses in this direction did not go, however, entirely unrebuked. The martyrs at Lyons, as we have seen, and it may be said the School of S. John in general, were distinguished by a noble moderation; by encraty, or temperance, in the truest sense of the word.[29] But as persecution became more virulent,

[27] The name Encratites (from *encrateia*, continence, temperance) covers a great many sects; and may properly be used as a generic term.

[28] Or rather the *act* of martyrdom; for it was a symptom of the sensuous tendency, that the word *martyr*, which applies to all who bear a true Christian witness before men, came to be restricted to a small and not in all cases exemplary class.

[29] Among the fragments attributed to S. Ignatius, we find the following:—Virginitatis jugum nemini impone. Periculosa quippe res est, et servatu difficilis, quando necessitate fit. Junioribus ante nubere permitte, quam cum scortis corrumpantur. But the general sound feeling of the Church is best shown in the 50th Apostolic Canon:—"If a bishop, a priest, or a deacon, or any ecclesiastic abstain from marriage, from flesh, or from wine, not for practice in self-denial, but from contempt, forgetting that God made every thing very good, that He made both the male and the female—in fact, even blaspheming the creation: he shall either retract his error, or be deposed and cast out of the Church. A layman also shall be treated in like manner." In the same way, clerical ascetics were compelled to eat flesh and drink wine *once*, that their abstinence on other occasions might not be attributed to a belief that these things were evil in themselves. *Ancyra*, Can. 14.

enthusiasm more lively, and especially as the philosopher's cloak, the badge of a proud austerity, was more and more seen in the Church, the line between proper self-discipline and intolerant severity was soon obliterated, or at least disregarded.

Tatian, a converted Philosopher, and for some time an associate of Justin Martyr at Rome, was content during the lifetime of the latter to indulge a certain severity to himself, without making his own practice a rule of obligation for others. Afterwards he travelled in the East and fell into Gnostic errors. The sects that adopted or developed his notions (Tatianites, Severians, from names of their leaders; or, Encratites, Puritans, from their professions of continence, temperance and pure religion), spread through all parts of the East and West. They condemned matrimony, abstained entirely from flesh and wine, and some of them (Hydroparastatæ, or Aquarians) forbade the use of the latter, even in the Eucharist. The Apotactites, renouncers of the good things of this world, Apostolics, imitators of primitive poverty, Saccophori, scrip-bearers, are still later varieties of the same sensuous spirit,[30] disguised under a thin veil of ostentatious simplicity or severity of manners.

Tatianites.

Puritani.

Aquarii and others

Among the idolatrous nations of antiquity, the Phrygians were distinguished for those ungovernable transports of sensuous enthusiasm, which S. Paul justly lays to the charge of heathenism in general. "Ye know," says he to the Corinthians, "that ye were Gentiles, *carried away* unto these dumb idols,

VI. MONTANUS.

[30] The theoretic notions of some of these sects were less popular than their austere manners. Thus dualism was prevalent among them; the doctrine of Satan's independent power; and (most offensive of all to the common Christian feeling) a belief that Adam was hopelessly damned.

even as ye were led." This "carrying away" was known under the name of *ecstacy*. It could be brought about by loud shouts, piercing cries, and even by the clang of instrumental music.[31] In addition to these, however, arts were employed not unlike the "mesmerism" and "spiritualism" of modern times. Accordingly, at certain seasons, the Phrygian population, male and female, especially the latter, excited themselves into fits of Corybantic phrensy, under the influence of which they exhibited those psychical phenomena which, wherever doctrine and discipline are subordinated to passion, are still familiar to the experience of the religious world.

Phrygian ecstacy.

Corybantic phrensy.

When the Phrygians were converted to Christianity, this sensuous spirit seems to have departed for a season. The Gospel gave food for the mind, as well as a stimulus to the affections.[32] It transformed the wild irregularity of religious impulse into the decency and order of religious life. Society was not only cleansed: it was clothed, as it were, and restored to its right mind.

Phrygian Christians.

But about the middle of the second century, symptoms of the old malady began to reappear. It was a

The old evil returns.

[31] "Tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum
Concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,
Et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentes;" etc.
Lucretii, *de R. N.* ii. 620.

[32] The Westminster Review, (No. cxliii.), in a very narrow-minded article on Christian Revivals, accuses the whole early Church of fostering these excitements. It forgets that Truth was always put foremost by Church teachers as the sanctifying power; and that Truth was proclaimed, not in a popular, hortatory way, but in a sober, argumentative style, which appeals to the understanding even more than to the affections. To test the question, let any one try to get up a revival (in the Reviewer's sense of the word) by reading to people the Sermon on the Mount, the Epistles of S. Paul, or any of the homilies of the early Fathers.

time undoubtedly of general excitability. Miraculous powers still lingered in the Church, or were still fondly cherished in popular imagination. There was a presentiment of the end of the world near at hand. Wild dreams of millennial glories were fondly listened to, and generally encouraged. Under these circumstances, a little flock of simple Christians gathered for devotional exercises in some retired spot—in a cemetery, perhaps, or around the tomb of an honored martyr,—and engaged, it may have been, in fasting or in watching, is suddenly startled from its sobriety by one of its members falling into a trance. The "ecstacy" is accompanied with wild babblings and rapturous demonstrations. The subject of it, while in the trance or on awaking, has a dream to tell, a wonderful and transporting vision. The thing soon becomes a decided epidemic.[33] It speeds from man to man, from congregation to congregation. The Clergy at first can make little of it. Afterwards, as they perceive the danger, they strive to check the contagion, to dispel the delusion. But their efforts are all in vain. Enthusiasm degenerates so easily into self-deception, and self-deception is so rapidly corrupted into a half-unconscious effort to draw in others, that to unveil a lying wonder is often the surest way for a time to increase the infatuation of the multitude who have been deluded by it.

Epidemic phrensy.

Montanus, a convert from heathenism, and once, it is said, a Priest of Cybele, is commonly cited by the ancients as the author of the Phrygian phrensy; bringing it about in connection with two prophet-

Montanus.

[33] The resemblance of this ecstacy to mesmeric phenomena is pointed out by Gieseler, in Tertullian *de animâ*, 9. See also Münteri, *Primord. Eccles. Afric.* cap. xxii.

Maximilla, Priscilla.

esses, Maximilla and Priscilla, by artful devices of his own. It is far more probable that he was originally a victim of it. Sharing in the common delusion, he had the tact and intellectual skill to become its interpreter and director.

Theory of development.

The Church, he reasoned, in growing older, ought to grow wiser and more sober. Patriarchal times had been the infancy of Religion, Judaism the childhood, Pentecost the glowing and exuberant youth. Each of these periods had been inaugurated by signs; each had been followed by a development of doctrine, and by a tightening of the bands of discipline and morals. Now, a new and more spiritual era is manifestly approaching. The world is nodding to its fall. The powers of evil are rallying their forces for the great and decisive battle. The Holy Ghost, the Paraclete promised to the Apostles, who has partially manifested Himself in the wonders of Pentecostal times, is coming upon the Church with a mightier demonstration of spiritual power. Youth is settling into manhood. With new wonders, then, new revelations, new knowledge, there must be a new girding up of the loins of the Church mind; a stricter discipline, a more perfect organization, a more complete subjection of the flesh to the inspiring and energizing Spirit.[34]

The end near.

Greater strictness needed.

Encratite notions adopted.

Hence an adoption at once of all the encratite notions current at that day. Second marriages, and even all marriages not solemnized in Church, were regarded as adultery. Absolution, especially for

[34] The views of Montanus come to us through the medium of Tertullian's vigorous mind; who in his tract, *de Virgin. veland.* 1, brings out finely the notion of *development* as opposed to custom or prescription.

mortal sins, was to be at least grudgingly accorded. To avoid persecution was to fall from the faith. For one Lent they had three, besides other fasts, half fasts, and seasons of dry food only.[35] Some abstained altogether from flesh and wine. All professed to go far beyond the practice of the Church, in sobriety of dress and of manner, in condemning amusements, in cultivating a rigid and marked austerity in all the relations of daily life.

Chiliast theory adopted.

In the same way the Millenarian theory, and other notions of a stimulating kind, clustered around Montanism by a natural and irresistible affinity. Pepuza, a town of Phrygia where Maximilla began her prophetic career, was venerated as the site of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The prophets kept excitement at fever heat by predictions of wars, persecutions, and of a great and final judgment immediately impending; predictions which signally failed in this instance, but which none the less served their purpose for a time.

Ministry prophetic.

As the Clergy quite unanimously rejected the new doctrine, it was necessary for Montanus to organize

[35] See Natalis Alexander, *tom.* v., *dissertat.* iv.; Kaye's *Tertullian;* Bingham's *Antiquities;* Beveridge, *Can. Cod. lib.* 3. *de Jejun. Quadrages.* It is probable from Tertull. *de Jejun.* ii., *de Orat.* xiv., and from Irenæus *ap. Euseb.* v. 24, that the only fast generally obligatory (except before baptism or ordination) was on Good Friday, Easter Eve, or (*Constitut. Apostol.* v. 14) the whole of Passion-week. The forty days of Lent were observed, however, with more or less of strictness: as also the station-days (Wednesday and Friday) of each week, when abstinence was practised till 3 o'clock. Among the Catholics, however, these observances were "of choice not of command," which gave Tertullian occasion, in his sharp way, to twit the Catholics with inconsistency: viz., that they observed more than they were willing to enjoin: *de Jejun.* ii. The arguments, by the way, which he puts in the mouths of Catholics against the stricter views of the Montanists, are precisely those which are employed in modern times against the excessive legality of Roman Catholic fasts.

a ministry of his own.[36] This he did consistently with his principle (that the Catholic Church, namely, was *psychical* and *carnal*, and therefore imperfect) by ordaining Patriarchs and Cenones over the heads of the Bishops; thus degrading the successors of the Apostles, says S. Jerome, to the third rank in the Ministry. As his ministry stood on the prophetic, rather than the sacerdotal basis, he could also consistently with his principles admit women to it; prophetesses[37] being known in all the early ages.

Females admitted.

The assertion that Montanus believed himself to be the Paraclete, probably arose from the distinction commonly made between the Phrygian inspiration, so called, and the inspiration attributed by the Church to Prophets and Apostles. In the latter, neither reason, will, nor any thing pertaining to man's integrity, is abolished or superseded. But Montanus professed to be an unconscious organ of the Spirit.[38] The Spirit, throwing him into an *ecstacy*, into an irrational, impersonal, irresponsible condition, breathed through him as a musician

The ecstacy unconscious.

[36] The Montanists also fell back upon the inherent kingly priesthood of the private Christian: Tertull. *de exhortat. castitat.* vii.: in which he argues, that, as laymen partake of the priestly office and do priestly acts (et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus), they ought also to come under the strict discipline of priestly lives. It may be observed, that this priestly character of the congregation enters into all true Liturgies; but was more apparent in the early Church, because the offerings (first fruits, etc.) were more tangible: the distinction between the old Law, and the new, in this respect, being, according to Irenæus, iv. 18, 2, that what was then done in a servile way is now done freely: quippe cum jam non a servis, sed a liberis offeratur. See *Gieseler*, § 53, *notes* 5, 16.

[37] Thiersch, the Irvingite historian, distinguishes in like manner between teaching and prophesying—the one being prohibited to women, the other not.

[38] The difference between the orthodox and the Montanist idea of inspiration is well treated in Lee, on the *Inspiration of H. S.*, Lect. v.; see, also, Kaye's *Justin M.* chap. ix.

through a flute; so that the phrase, *thus saith the Prophet*, would be no more proper in his case, than to say, thus says the mouth, or thus writes the pen, or thus plays the harp.

Character of Montanus.

Other absurdities and blasphemies attributed to Montanus, are so manifestly taken from vague rumor, or from hostile interpretation, that little credit can be given them at the present day. It seems improbable also, that he was such a simpleton as is sometimes represented. Respectable powers of mind, great austerity of life, and even practical good sense within a certain range, may co-exist with absurdities bordering on insanity; and the consistency of Montanism in itself, as well as the strong and broad hold it gained in large portions of the world, seem to bear witness to the intellectual ability, and in the popular sense of the word, to the sincerity of its author.

Spread of the new prophecy

At all events, Montanism became the popular heresy of the day. Its encratite principles recommended it to some; its fervid enthusiasm carried away others. Phrygia and Galatia were overrun by it. The light of the golden candlestick of Thyatira was extinguished by it for nearly a century. From the East in flew swiftly to the West; and in Rome one of the Bishops towards the end of the century, most probably Victor, was disposed for awhile to look favorably upon it, and indeed sent letters of peace to the new prophets. In North Africa it took deeper root. Wherever it spread, its followers, calling themselves "spiritual," and despising the Catholics as "carnal," or abhorring them as enemies of the Spirit, were distinguished by a severity and sim-

in the West.

plicity of life which disposed many earnest men to look favorably upon them.

VII. RATIONALIST REACTION.

So mighty a movement in the sensuous direction as that of the Montanist, Encratite, and even Gnostic Sects (for the Gnostics became sensuous as soon as they formed into Sects), could not fail to arouse the elements of a powerful reaction. Among the Montanists themselves, there arose a party holding views which were afterwards known in the Church as Sabellian.[39] These, however, were probably men ignorant of theology, who, absorbed in their doctrine of the Paraclete, confounded with Him the other Persons of the Trinity.

The Alogi, Monarchians.

The Alogi, deniers of the Logos of S. John's Gospel, were inclined to doubt the reality of spiritual gifts, and to reject the Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John.[40] In fact, the doctrine of the millennium, the mission of the Spirit, and the mystery of a manifold Divine operation in the human heart, had been so vilified by the sensuous trail of heretical interpretation, that impatient minds were naturally disgusted. A skeptical spirit had also been provoked by over sharp distinctions between the Persons of the Trinity. The doctrine of Subordination was so maintained by some, as to give a handle for the charge of Tritheism. To avoid errors on this side, many were led to contend for the doctrine of the divine *Monarchy*, either by denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, or by making Him a mere temporary embodiment or manifestation of the Father. Among those who carried

Tritheism.

[39] Tertullian *de Præscript. Hæret.*, 52, mentions two sects of Montanists, those who followed Proculus, and those who followed Æschines; the latter maintained that the Father and the Son are one Person.

[40] S. Irenæus, iii. 11, cited in Gies. § 48.

this reaction to the extreme, Theodotus the Tanner, Theodotus the Money-changer, and Artemas or Artemon, were particularly prominent. They rejected the divinity of Christ. From a notion of one of them,[41] that Christ was inferior in the priesthood to that mysterious personage, Melchizedek, his followers got the name of Melchizedekians.

Praxeas, Patripassians.

Praxeas, coming to Rome from the East, at the time when Victor was favoring the new Prophets, by his arguments and representations undeceived the Roman Pontiff; but afterwards reasoned himself into a heresy more ruinous and hardly more rational than the one he had exposed.[42] In explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, possibly with a view to cut away the ground from under the Montanist delusion, he laid himself open to the charge of *Patripassianism;* contending that He who suffered on the cross was not in substance only, but in person, one with the Father.

Rationalist temper.

In this way the philosophizing spirit came back into the Church, where it secured a foothold, from which it was not dislodged for several ages.[43] Indeed, it has never been dislodged: for the habit of explaining the mysteries of the Gospel having once come in on the side of error, it was found necessary to employ it on the side of Truth. The Church of Rome was particularly troubled in this way. Noëtus, who taught in Asia Minor about the end of the second century,

In Rome.

[41] Tertullian *de Præscript. Hæres.* 53.

[42] "Praxeas, in Rome, accomplished two works of the devil: he cast out prophecy and brought in heresy; he banished the Paraclete and crucified the Father." *Tertullian adv. Praxeam*, c. 1. Tertullian intimates that Victor was *silent* with regard to the heresy of Praxeas.

[43] An anonymous writer in *Euseb.* v. 28, dwells much on the fondness of these heretics for syllogisms, and for Aristotle, Theophrastus and Galen. They were much addicted also to mathematical studies.

held the same view as Praxeas in a more philosophic shape; and Epigonus and Cleomenes, his disciples, preaching in the imperial city, were more or less favored by Zephyrinus and Callistus. How far these Roman Bishops were implicated in the heresy, it is hard to say. With the Artemonites on one side denying the divinity of Christ, and with the Patripassians on the other exalting His divinity at the expense of His personality, they were certainly in a difficult position. It is to their credit, that Theodotus and Artemon were promptly condemned.

Sabellius.

The same promptitude was shown in the case of Sabellius, who flourished also in the first half of the third century, and expounded the doctrine of the Trinity in a way which has proved as difficult to explain as the original doctrine itself. The sum of his teaching would seem to be this: *God is a monad expanded into a triad.*[44] As man is one, yet we distinguish in him the body (that is, the whole frame corporeal and spiritual), and *the soul* (which again stands for the whole man), and *the spirit* (of which the same is to be said); or as the sun is one, yet we distinguish the round body, and the light, and the heat: so God is one, yet the Father, the Son and the Spirit may each express in His own way the fulness of the expanded or contracted Godhead. Like all analogies of the kind, this is capable of being interpreted in many different senses. It may stand for a Trinity of modes,[45] a Trinity of emanations, a Trinity of three divine energies.[46] If rigidly pressed, it would cer-

Monad and Triad.

[44] S. Athanas. *c. Arian. Or.* iv., 12, 13; for other statements of his doctrine see *Gieseler, Ch. H.* § 60, n. 10 (Smith's Am. ed.) In the *monad* there was a power of contraction and expansion — *systole* and *ektasis*.

[45] S. *Basil.* ep. 210, 214.

[46] *Epiphan. Hæres.* lxii. 1.

tainly lead to a denial of the proper personality of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And this last consequence Sabellius seems to have accepted. He admitted *prosopa*, persons, but only in the dramatic sense; characters, to be put on or put off, for particular dispensations. In the effort, however, to give a rational account of his doctrine on the positive side, he doubtless encountered difficulties, which it was easier to evade by illustrations than to meet and vanquish by intelligible definitions.

Beryllus.

Somewhat later than Sabellius, Beryllus Bishop of Bostra in Arabia taught, that Christ before the Incarnation had no personal existence,[47] and that He has no proper divinity of His own, but only that of the Father dwelling in Him. He denied also the existence of a human soul in Christ, the indwelling Deity supplying its place. When confuted by Origen on this latter point, in an Arabian Synod holden near the middle of the third century, he also abandoned the former error.

A. D. 244.

Paul of Samosata.

Somewhat later still, Paul of Samosata Bishop of Antioch taught a kind of deification of the blameless man Jesus, by an impersonal, indwelling Logos.[48]

VIII. Schools and Parties.

While many in this way were seduced by a philosophizing spirit into open heresy, there were innumerable others who speculated to the utmost limit of the rule of faith, and perplexed simple souls by subtle distinctions and analogies.[49] The Logos of S. John was to philosophic minds particularly sugges-

[47] *Euseb.* vi. 33.

[48] See Book iii. ch. 5.

[49] On the subject of the remainder of this chapter there are many modern writers of first-rate ability: see particularly Burton, *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*, and Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*. In the latter are concise summaries of the results of German criticism. See also Neander, *Hist. of Christ. Dogmas.*

tive. God *silent* might be distinguished from God speaking, or the Word *immanent* in the Father from the Word forthgoing into creation or redemption, in such a way as to express any amount of vital truth, or to cover any amount of dangerous error. The same may be said of the theories of *emissions*, *processions*, *emanations*, *expansions*, and the like, by which the relation of the Son to the Father was sometimes more clearly than satisfactorily explained. Justin Martyr, with his contemporaries Athenagoras and Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, the Alexandrine school, and in the West Hippolytus and Tertullian, were among the most active in these efforts to give what may be called a philosophic expression to the Faith commonly received. On the other hand, the cautious, traditionary, reverential school, which lingered to the end of the second century in the person of Irenæus,[50] was wary of the use of scientific terms, and taught the doctrine of the Trinity in the language of Scripture and the Creeds. Of the others also it may be said, that the terms in which they taught may be distinguished from those in

School of progress.

Traditionary school.

Conservative spirit.

[50] "If any one shall ask, *How* was the Son produced from the Father?—we answer, No one knows . . . save alone the Father who begat and the Son who was begotten." S. Iren. *adv. Hæres.* ii. 28. In the same way he ridicules those theological *obstetricians*, who professing in one breath that "His generation is indescribable," go on in the next to describe His generation and forthgoing, by such analogies as "a word emitted from a thought." "That a word is emitted from a thought is what everybody knows. It is therefore *no great discovery they make* who talk about emissions, and apply the term to the only-begotten Word of God; likening Him whom they call indescribable and unutterable . . . to a word uttered or emitted by man." In other words, Irenæus saw the fallacy, common to thinkers of all ages, of imagining that by giving new names to things they shed new light upon them.

which they *explained*,[51] the latter being as a general rule more open to suspicion.

Faith and knowledge

The traditionary ground, however, could not be retained, without at all events a thorough examination. Christianity as a Truth, or rather as *the* Truth, offered a constant challenge to the philosophic world. But to maintain that challenge she was forced in a measure to adopt the language of the Schools, and to answer a multitude of questions which the mass of simple believers would never have thought of asking. As Origen intimates, the generality of those who called themselves Christians, knowing nothing but *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*, thought they had the whole *Logos* in the Word made flesh. A lower class (the Ebionites or Nazarenes) thought they had the whole when they recognized Jesus as *the Son of David*. But the higher man rises in the intellectual scale, the deeper is the significance of that question, What think ye of Christ? It was a matter of simple necessity, then, that the Truth revealed to the Church should undergo a theoretic scrutiny, and that distinctions which readily occurred to speculative minds should be at first overlooked, or dimly apprehended, and should afterwards, before they were settled,[52] give rise to variations of expres-

Questions and distinctions.

[51] Even Irenæus is accused (by Duncker and others) of hopeless self-contradiction, because his constant assertion of the equality of the Father and the Son can be coupled with such phrases, as "the Father is above all, being Himself the head of the Son."

[52] Some theories served as a *scaffolding*, so to speak: e. g. the doctrine of *subordination*, which, before the distinctions of *substance*, *person*, and *office* were generally apprehended, enabled philosophic minds to hold to the personality of the Son. The same is to be said of the analogies—such as *fire* lighting *fire*, *thoughts* emitting *words*, etc., etc. Among the terms finally adopted in the Church were the *trias* of Theophilus, the *trinitas* of Tertullian, the *eternal generation* of Origen: the *homoousion* had a harder struggle, being

sion, or even to mutual distrust and misapprehension.

Two offices of the Church.

The Church, in fact, had two works before her. The one was to hold the simple Creed. The other was to frame those noble instruments, the Latin and Greek tongues, into a fitness for the expression of all that the Creed contains. The latter task devolved upon the Schools; the former upon the Church itself —upon the common sense, that is, of believers as a body. To meet both requirements, fixed limits of belief were essential; but within those limits a reasonable freedom of private speculation.[53] Accordingly, amid all the uncertainties arising from illusive analogies or inadequate definitions, three points at least remained fixed in the general consciousness of the Church. God is one: Christ is God: Christ is a Person distinct from the Person of the Father. Within those limits, which in ordinary teaching were respected even by those who in their larger flights of speculation seemed to disregard them, no little freedom was allowed. But when those limits were transcended by any teacher, however eminent in his position or distinguished for his abilities; when, in other words, either the proper divinity or the distinct personality of the Son of God was denied; then the churchly and orthodox instinct made itself felt. In the same way, the undeviating direction of belief was seen in the fact, that the drift of all discussion was to bring out more fully and

Freedom of opinion.

Fixed limits of belief.

much favored by the Sabellians, and asociated more or less with notions of *division* or *expansion*. See Hagenbach, § 40–46.

[53] Bishop Bull, *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, champions the substantial orthodoxy of the ante-Nicene fathers: Petavius, the learned Jesuit, de *Theologicis Dogmaticis*, impugns it. More recent writers are found in countless numbers on either side.

more fairly, against the Gnostics, the real and perfect humanity of our Lord.

Minor points.

In points of secondary interest there was equal activity of mind, with more room for philosophizing. The Apologist naturally undertook to answer the many subtle questions, with which his accomplished predecessor the Sophist had wearied himself to little or no purpose. Hence the *origin of evil*, the *eternity of matter*, the *nature of spirit* and of *body*, or of *souls*, *angels*, *demons;* and, in fact, a multiplicity of problems, physical or metaphysical, were answered by guesses more or less ingenious, and more or less supported by texts of Scripture interpreted according to the science of the times.[54] At the bottom of all this there was a real thirst for knowledge. There was something too of the old ambition of the Sophists: a desire to appear to know every thing, or perhaps a more creditable wish, though not more reasonable, that the Church should be shown to have the keys to all kinds of science. From whichever cause it came, the passion for opening mysteries soon passed the bounds of moderation among a large class of teachers; leading in all the great schools to a bias more or less heretical, and preparing the way for a long and deadly conflict with new shapes of evil.

Spirit of inquiry.

Three chief schools.

But the bringing out of a true Christian gnosis from the rich stores of Revelation was none the less a real and necessary task; towards the fulfilment of which each great division of the Church was led by a sure instinct to do its own part. The more practical West, headed by Rome and North Africa, directed its attention mainly to questions of Church life; and

The West.

[54] See Mosheim's *Commentaries*, art. on Origen.

in theology was more solicitous to guard the traditional belief, than curiously to explore its philosophic meaning. Irenæus, in the spirit of the school of Polycarp, appealed to the tradition,[55] or common teaching, of the Apostolic Churches. Tertullian, in like manner, laid no little stress on *prescription*, and on the rule of faith, "una omnino, sola immobilis et irreformabilis." In controversy, however, with Praxeas and the patripassian heresy, he was driven, as usual in controversy, into the erection of those hastily formed defences which may be called the field-works of theology:[56] theories, which crumble of themselves as soon as they have served their temporary purpose. Rome, being about equally beset by the patripassian and the subordination doctrine, kept in the main a steady balance between the two. Novatian, the famous schismatic, argued solidly and clearly for the orthodox belief. Dionysius, Bishop in the latter half of the third century, made the nearest approach, perhaps, of any theologian during that period, to the exact *via media* of the Nicene definitions.[57] On the whole, however, the West was more distinguished for holding the Faith, than for shedding much light upon it. In the East it was almost the reverse. Every thing tended there towards refined and subtle speculations. In

Rome.

The East.

[55] This was a purely practical ground; and it is easy to see (the principal passages are given in Gieseler, § 51) that it meant nothing more than the *common belief*, as opposed either to *secret traditions* or private speculations. Hence Rome was entitled to particular weight, as being a centre of universal resort, a point of *confluence* to opinions and traditions from all quarters:—"in quâ semper *ab his qui sunt undique* conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio." See Book iii. chap. 4 of this History.

[56] He is liable to the charge of *subordinationism*: Tertull. *adv. Prax.* ii.; and therefore had to defend himself against the charge of *tritheism*: *adv. Prax.* iii.

[57] See Gieseler, § 66, n. 16.

the two great schools of Antioch in Syria, and Alexandria in Egypt, the one distinguished for its rational the other for its ultra-spiritual bias, numberless questions were opened and explored, many positions were taken which proved untenable, and the minds of the learned were more or less troubled; but the result, on the whole, was an advance in the direction of a lively understanding of the Creed, as not merely "a rule of belief," but rather an all-pervading essence and spirit of the truth. Thus the East and the West, or more precisely Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, supplied one another's deficiencies; and were the threefold cord of witness, as it were, by which every word of the common trust became more firmly bound upon the minds and consciences of believers.

Rome, Alexandria, Antioch.

CHAPTER VIII.

HERESIES HOW MET—COUNCILS.

Of the vast flood of heresies, partly enumerated and described in the preceding chapter, the same general account may be given, as of the waters poured forth from the mouth of the dragon who persecuted the Woman of the Apocalypse; the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. They were not vanquished by wisdom, or by mental prowess only; though logic in every form was vigorously employed against them: it was rather, that they destroyed themselves; being providentially divided, and subdivided, flowing into sect-channels which

Heresies divided and disintegrated

became ever more narrow and more shallow, till, gradually absorbed into heathenism, they so disappeared and came to nought.

Age of dialectics.

The Gnostic systems especially had in them no principle of union, or even of cohesion. Their existence, therefore, is chiefly interesting as showing the mental subtlety and activity of the times, and as in part accounting for that transition which took place, from an age of simple faith to one of dialectics and polemical discussion. It was gnosticism, in fact, which awakened the Church to a consciousness of her vast intellectual resources. In the presence of this great development of heathen wisdom, she felt that she must convince the minds as well as win the hearts of men. From the high ground of simple dogma she must descend into the arena of philosophic disputation. The candle of the Gospel, once lighted, could not be hid under a bushel. It must shed its light upon that medley of loose notions by which the world was distracted. By a natural instinct, therefore, and in the main a healthy one, the successors of Polycarp and Pothinus departed more and more from the quiet ways of these venerable fathers, and threw themselves earnestly into the great battles of the day.

Weapons of faith.

The contest with the Montanist and other sensuous heresies had a similar effect: though, in this case, the energies of the Church were drawn into a different channel, and questions of discipline or order attracted the chief attention. When the Phrygian enthusiasm first broke out, the Clergy, strong in simple faith and unaccustomed to the use of dialectic weapons, were for a little while content to *exorcise* the evil. They soon found that it was a spirit not

so easily allayed. Though such men as "Zoticus of Comana and Julian of Apamea, eminent Bishops of the Church," attempted "to examine the babbling spirit, their tongues were bridled," we are told, "by a certain Themison and his followers." In the same way, "the blessed Sotas in Anchialus wished to cast out the dæmon from Priscilla, but the hypocrites would not allow him." Some who made similar efforts from motives of vain-glory not only failed, but became themselves victims of the contagious disorder.[1] Others were satisfied to avoid, or simply rebuke, the possession, and by this prudent course escaped injury themselves, but do not seem to have been able to neutralize its power. The Phrygian ecstacy, in short, was a phenomenon by which the wisest heads were not a little puzzled. If it was, what religious men believed, a demoniacal possession,[2] it was manifestly one of that kind which requires something more than adjuration to cast it out.

Exorcism fails.

Under these circumstances, it is highly interesting to observe, as the necessity of confuting the new doctrine became more apparent, how cautiously the simple faith of the times girded itself, as it were, for the unwelcome task.[3] "For a long time urged," remarks one, "to write a discourse against the heresy, *I have been somewhat in doubt until now*, not indeed for want of argument to confute the false doctrine, but from a fearful apprehension *lest I should seem to be uttering new precepts*, or to be

Reason appealed to.

Wholesome dread of novelties.

[1] Euseb. v. 16, 19.

[2] The alternate elation and dejection of the victims of this delusion are described by Euseb. v. 16. Its analogy to phenomena in modern "Spiritualism" must strike every one who has looked into this remarkable phrensy.

[3] Euseb. v. 16.

adding something to that doctrine of the New Testament, which no one who would live according to the Gospel should add to or diminish." With many such misgivings, the controversy after a while was fairly inaugurated. Apollinaris of Hierapolis in Asia; Miltiades a philosopher, Apologist, and historian; Serapion the eighth Bishop of Antioch; Apollonius who wrote just forty years after Montanus arose; and many other leading minds of the day, met the new prophets in oral disputation and in writing; or fortified the faith of believers with copious proofs from the Scriptures, that ecstasy was a mark of diabolic rather than of divine inspiration. The question thus opened was one of the most difficult in Religion, and was most elaborately discussed. That the Spirit does not overpower or extinguish, but elevates and quickens the natural powers of man; that even under the hand of the Most High, the prophet is not a mere instrument or organ, but rather a laborer together with God; that, in short, the man inspired is a man in full possession of his reason, was argued with great ability from the Old Testament and the New; and in the development of this argument a new impulse was given to the critical study of the Scriptures. "The false prophet," it was contended,[4] "is carried away by a vehement ecstacy devoid of shame or apprehension. Let the followers of Montanus show, that any in the Old or New Testament were thus violently agitated and carried away in spirit: that Agabus, or Judas, or Silas, or the daughters of Philip, or Ammias in Philadelphia, or Quadratus, or others

Operation of the Spirit.

True Prophets and false.

[4] Euseb. v. 17.

such-like, ever acted in this way." Thus, gifts of prophetic power were not declared impossible: the Church, in fact, generally believed in their continuance, or at least in their occasional reappearance: it was merely contended that the claim to such gifts should be tested by the rules of reason, common sense, and Holy Scripture. Spirits tried.

But in this general resort to reason and dialectic skill, it was not forgotten that the Church is in a special sense the witness to the Truth; and that it is her office to confute error by the force of united testimony, as well as by the weapons of argument and persuasion. The Church a witness.

Whether Provincial Synods[5] had been held before the rise of the Phrygian delusion, the silence of antiquity leaves uncertain. Gnosticism, perhaps, was too remote from the sympathies of believers, or too obviously at variance with the Creed, to need any formal or united testimony against it. It appealed to philosophic minds, and such minds could meet it with philosophic weapons. But Montanism was eminently a popular delusion. Its prominent features were but slight exaggerations of errors more or less tolerated, or even of truths or half-truths commonly received. It had been warmed into life in the very bosom of the Church. And as with Montanism, so with the ration- Synods.

[5] The Apostolic Councils mentioned in the Acts (i. vi. xv.) are a more than sufficient precedent for the Synods of later times, inasmuch as the Apostles, being individually inspired, had less need to confer with one another or with the Elders and Brethren. It may be observed of these Councils, that (1) there was particular business before each; (2) special prayer for divine guidance; (3) business proposed and so far as necessary discussed; (4) a decision pronounced, agreed to by all present and put forth in the name of all: see Acts i. 16, 24; vi. 5; xv. 22, 23. Venerable Bede supposes, that the Assembly in Acts, xxi. 18, was also a Council: namely, a Council of the Jerusalem Church.

alistic errors that arose in the controversy with it. While Christians everywhere acknowledged one supreme and only God, and everywhere confessed in this Godhead the Names of three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; yet with regard to the great mystery of the Three in One there had been little controversy, and consequently little need of subtle definitions. Plausible misstatements, therefore, of the doctrine of the Church, especially if found available in the war against Montanus, might easily obtain currency among a large number of believers. From an instinctive feeling of danger on this side, the Bishops fell back upon the Catholic unity of the Church, or, in fact, upon the collegiate type of the ministerial office; were more frequent than hitherto in conference and correspondence; and Synods, at first occasional, afterwards more regular, and at length once or twice a year, became in a short time the settled order of things. It is not improbable, however, that such Councils had been holden from time to time, long before they began to make a figure in Church history.[6] The primitive Church, as a general rule, took very little pains to record its own beginnings.

Their necessity.

First occasional, then regular.

In these early Councils the proceedings seem to have been of a very simple character. The Brethren came together; namely, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the presence of the People; and united their voices and subscriptions in testimony to the Truth, or in condemnation of some error. Thus the Martyrs of Lyons, when in prison, formed a kind of

United witness to the truth.

[6] One of the earliest on record (after Apostolic times) is said to have been holden in Sicily, about A. D. 125, against one Heracleon, a follower of Valentinus, who taught that *sin in the baptized is no longer sin*. See Mansi *Concilia*. For others, see Routh's *Reliqu. Sacr.*

concilium, and as such bore their witness against the heresy of Montanus. So, in a letter of Serapion of Antioch quoted by Eusebius, there are subscriptions of several Bishops: for example, "I, Aurelius Cyrenius, a Witness;" or, "Ælius Publius Julius Bishop of Debeltum a colony of Thrace, as sure as God lives in Heaven." In another early Synod, headed by Apollonius of Corinth,[7] it is mentioned that with the signatures many testimonies of the scriptures were inserted: "to show that their zeal was against the wicked sects, not against the persons of the sectarians."

Passion for legislation.

It is probable that the passion for legislation, the besetting sin of assemblies of this kind, was little felt before the middle or towards the end of the third century. The earliest canons are aimed chiefly at two extremes:[8] a proud ascetic spirit encroaching on the one side, and heathenish immoralities and irregularities overflowing on the other.

Councils apostolic.

However this may be, the same cause that brought the Apostles and Brethren together in conference during the first century, was found equally operative with the Bishops and People of the second. The instinct of self-defence is a sufficient reason in both cases. S. Paul, contending against the rigid views of the Judaizers in Antioch, was strengthened for the battle by the united testimony of the Apostles, Elders and Brethren in Jerusalem.[9] So, in later times, the Doc-

[7] Mansi *Concilia*, tom. i., p. 681. The proceedings of the African Council, appended to S. Cyprian's works, will give a clear idea of the way in which things were managed in those bodies.

[8] See Apostolic Constitutions, and Canons; also, Canons of early African Synods, in Münter's *Primordia Eccl. Afric.*

[9] Acts, xv. It is pleasing to notice in the latest Synods of this period that the Apostolic precedent was still closely followed; that Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and People were all present. What

tor or Disputer, whose painful duty it was to shut the mouths of heretics, had need to be corrected or confirmed, whichever it might be, by the deliberate judgment of the great body of his Brethren.

Synods against Synods.

But when, as sometimes happened, Councils themselves became parties in controversy, a remedy could be found only in waiting for the action of larger, more general, and more impartial Synods. Such was the case with the long continued strife about the Asiatic Pascha. In this case, Italian and other Councils were opposed to Asiatic. The same difficulty was experienced in the baptismal controversy. But even in such cases, the habit of looking from individual, local or sectional disputants to the great body of the Brethren, and of awaiting their decision, had undoubtedly a sobering and liberalizing effect; so that differences which in any other society would have led to grievous schisms, were in the case of Catholics kept in charitable suspension, till finally the times were ripe for a settlement satisfactory to all. In this way it happened, that the great Council of Nice had questions up before it which had been mooted for two centuries or more. Its decisions were the complement of the decisions of many preceding Synods.

Sobering influence.

New times, new strength.

In short, that new aspect of Church life which marks the latter half of the second century, was a necessary and wholesome adaptation to altered circumstances. The Church, in her conflict with the

share the People had in the proceedings is not easy to determine. Bishops, at that period, being in part chosen by the People, and being from the nature of their office in constant intercourse with them, were eminently representatives of what may be called the lay-sense of the Church. Few cases occurred, therefore, in which the sentiments of the Bishops and of the People materially differed. Whenever an opposition party existed, it found its main strength among the Clergy. See Pusey, *Councils of the Church*, Oxf. 1857.

great Serpent, had to be led into the wilderness, as it were. Amid new and searching trials, she was to become conscious of new strength. From lack of appreciation of this fact, the history of primitive Christianity has been much misunderstood. On the one hand, virtues have been attributed to this period with a rhetorical profusion unwarranted by facts. On the other hand, every change or imagined change has been regarded as a corruption. But, in sober truth, there is no portion of Church history which has not vices enough in it to shock a sensitive mind, or virtues enough, if looked for, to command its admiration. The real proof of an age is, how it meets its own trials, and accomplishes its own work. To judge aright, therefore, of the complex and often painful details of the period we are now approaching, not only the varied character of the conflict from within and from without, but the infinite importance of the interests at stake, and above all, the mingled earnestness and frivolity of an age equally profligate and enlightened, must be taken into the account and kept charitably in view.

An age judged by its trials.

CHAPTER IX.

S. IRENÆUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

With the exception of two distinguished Africans, Minucius Felix the Apologist, and Tertullian the father of Latin theology, all the leading champions of the Faith, at the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, were Greek in extraction, lan-

Leading champions.

guage, and intellectual habits. Of these, S. Irenæus was in the West the most prominent example.

S. Irenæus A. D. 120–202.

Brought up from early childhood under the eye of Polycarp, Pothinus, Papias, and other disciples of S. John, he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of that devout and thoughtful school. But he was an eager inquirer also into all the learning of his age.[1] So far as can be judged from the few fragments that remain of the Greek original, his style is not devoid of elegance and good taste. But the rich and expressive imagery of the Scriptures, and the fresh world of thought which had come in with Christianity, no longer admitted of strict adherence to classic models. To hold the new wine of the Gospel, new bottles must be made. The zest with which the early Fathers studied the sacred writings; their profound and lively faith in the divine Spirit that breathed through them; the loving ingenuity with which they made all parts alike profitable for instruction; their luminous method of quoting; and above all, the extraordinary aptness, abundance, and diversity of their citations, were creating a new literature quite different from the classic, and requiring to be judged by an entirely different rule. Irenæus was one of the most discreet of the first laborers in this field. His wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures, however, was a knowledge of the heart even more than of the head; and his interpretations, if judged by modern canons, are liable to the charge of occasional extravagance.

New wine new bottles.

Blemishes.

He had, in fact, the faults as well as merits of his school. Seeing Christ in every thing, and delighting

[1] Tertull. *advers. Valent.* 5.

more in the application than in the critical interpretation of the Scriptures, he was yet in some points a literalist to a dangerous extent. From Papias he inherited the Millenarian doctrine. Like Justin, he regarded the sons of God mentioned in Genesis[2] as angelic beings. He believed the story of the miraculous agreement and plenary inspiration of the authors of the Septuagint version, as also the singular notion that the Hebrew Scriptures had perished before the days of Ezra, who was miraculously enabled to reproduce them. Fancies of this kind he took at second hand, relying upon the authority of such men as Papias, or upon the credit of apocryphal productions.[3] For his opinion that our Lord was forty years of age at the time of His crucifixion, he gives the authority of S. Polycarp and other hearers of S. John; which, as the ancient mind remembered numbers chiefly by symbolical association, was probably a mere slip of memory. With a few blemishes of this kind, all of them more or less traceable to private and apocryphal traditions, the extant works of S. Irenæus[4] are among the most valuable of the remains of the first three centuries.

Traditions

At what time he removed from Asia Minor to Lyons has not been definitely ascertained. It is only known that at the period of the Lyonnese persecution he was a distinguished Presbyter of that Church; and was entrusted by the martyrs then in

Irenæus Bishop.

[2] Gen. vi. 2.

[3] Such as the IVth Book of Esdras; for the sayings of Papias and other *seniores apud Irenæum*, see Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i.

[4] S. Irenæi Episc. Lugdunensis et Martyr. *Contra Hæreses*, etc. D. R. Massuet, Paris, MDCCX; Beaven's *Life and Times of S. Irenæus;* Tillemont, *Memoires*, etc. tom. iii.; and the five *Books against Heresies*, edited by Harvey, Cambr. 1857.

prison with the letter which they wrote to Eleutherus of Rome, for the promotion of peace among the Churches: in testimony, that is, against the formidable novelty of the heresy of Montanus. After the death of Pothinus he became Bishop, and had a certain primacy over the Gallic Churches.[5] Of his labors and influence in that extensive field, little is told us beyond the fact that he sent missions to Besançon and Valence; and became, in general, the teacher and enlightener of the Celtic nation.

A. D. 178.

Troubles in Rome.

His cares, however, were not confined to his own province. Connected with Asia Minor by birth and education, and interested in the affairs of the Roman Christians by his mission to the imperial city, he was deeply concerned for the growing troubles of Christendom at large, and for those of the Roman Church in particular. For the Metropolis at this period was not a little distracted by internal feuds. One Blastus, an Asiatic and a Presbyter, was forming a party in the Judaizing direction, and made a point of celebrating the Pascha on the fourteenth day of the month. Whether he ran into formal schism is not quite clear. So also one Florinus, a Roman Presbyter, alarmed at the bias that existed among speculative minds towards the heresy of two principles, maintained the doctrine of the Divine *monarchy* in a way which seemed to make God the author of evil. Irenæus argued and remonstrated with both of these. Both were Asiatics by birth; and Florinus, in particular, he could appeal to by their joint remembrance of the saintly Polycarp. It shows the manifold temptations of the times, and the facility with

Blastus and Florinus.

[5] Euseb. v. 23.

which men glide from one heresy to another, that Florinus, when driven from his monarchian position, took refuge in the Valentinian theory; finding the source of all evil in *the body* of man, or in the material world, and making it to have dropped, as it were, from the carelessness of one of the lower æons.

Caution of Irenæus.

The pursuit of error into this new labyrinth was felt by Irenæus to be a difficult and perilous undertaking. In proportion as charity required him to apply the knife or the caustic to the tumid errors that preyed upon the Church, the same charity demanded that it should be done with tenderness to the patient, and with a thorough understanding of the exact nature of the disease.[6] In argument with heretics, every word must be weighed, every logical consequence diligently explored. Hence the solemn adjuration, with which his treatise on *the Ogdoad* concludes; and for calling attention to which we have to thank Eusebius, as it lets us not into the mind merely, but into the very heart of a high-toned, charitable, and conscientious orthodoxy. "I adjure," says he, "the transcriber of this book by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His glorious appearing when He comes to judge the quick and dead, that thou carefully compare and correct thy transcript by this very copy, and that thou transcribe this adjuration and set it in thy copy." A book against heretics was intended to be a chart to save souls from shipwreck;[7] it must be a work, therefore, of the most scrupulous accuracy.

His adjuration.

Once engaged in the study and refutation of Gnos-

[6] S. Iren. lib. iii. c. 46.

[7] S. Iren. lib. 4. For an interesting collection of *Diræ et Adjurationes Libris Additæ*, see Fabricius, *Bibliothec. Græc.* lib. v. cap. 1.

tic heresies, Irenæus had many reasons for perseverance in his task. One Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, had given a popular form to the æon-system of his master, and was disseminating it widely among the cities of the Rhone. He was able, by some sort of legerdemain, to convert the wine of the Sacrament into blood. By this and similar arts, he attached to himself a flock of silly women, wealthy and of high rank, whom he drugged or otherwise induced into an ecstatic state, similar to that witnessed among the Phrygian prophetesses. Religions of this kind, combining the popular *spiritualism* of the day with certain elements of the Gospel, were formidable rivals of Christianity in the affections of the people. Those who embraced such systems were "spiritual souls;" those who rejected them were "psychical" or "carnal." But as spiritual souls, from the Valentinian point of view, were incapable of evil or of contamination by evil; and as Marcus among other things pretended to confer a miraculous gift of invisibility: the descent from high-wrought religious enthusiasm to the lowest sensuality was rendered particularly easy. Irenæus saw, in the vile practices of these Marcosians, a legitimate development of Gnostic and Valentinian principles. To the study of these principles, therefore, and to their exposure and refutation, he devoted a large portion of his time for many years.

The Marcosians.

Their vile practices.

Paschal question.

The part he bore in the Paschal controversy was highly honorable, and worthy of a disciple of S. Polycarp.

A. D. 176.

As already noticed in this chapter, there was a faction at Rome, of which one Blastus seems to have been chief in the times of Eleutherus, that availed themselves of the difference of custom between Rome

and Asia Minor as a handle of sedition. It is probable that there were many Asiatic Christians in the imperial city. For some time, according to the charitable understanding which existed between Polycarp and Anicetus, these seem to have been allowed to follow the custom of their own country, ending the fast before the Pascha on the fourteenth day of Nisan, instead of waiting for the ensuing Sunday. Such differences would be a matter of little moment, so long as there existed no other causes of dissension. But when a seditious spirit became almost a chronic evil, and especially when a Judaizing bias began to show itself, any peculiarity, however unimportant, could be converted into a rallying point for schism, or at least of disaffection. This began to be the case with the Easter controversy. The successors of Anicetus could not let the question stand where he had left it. Soter seems to A. D. 168. have found it necessary to insist upon conformity to the Roman practice, on the part of those Asiatics, at least, who were residents in Rome. The question, Becomes more complex. the meanwhile, was becoming more complicated. The Laodicean Christians, not content to break the fast at the same time with the Jews, had, it would seem, adopted the further custom of eating a paschal lamb on the occasion.[8] It was under these circumstances that Victor, being provoked without doubt A. D. 196. by the increase of the factious spirit before-mentioned, and appealing to a desire very generally

[8] This, however, is hardly more than a plausible conjecture, founded on slight intimations in Euseb. iv. 26, and in the *Chronicon Paschale*. See Gieseler, § 53 (Smith's Ed.), n. 34–36. The question whether our Lord ate the paschal lamb on the fourteenth day, or by anticipation on the thirteenth, is amply discussed in Dr. Jarvis's *Introduction*, part ii. ch. vii.

entertained, initiated a movement towards uniformity of practice in all parts of the world. He wrote to the various Churches, and among others to those of Asia Minor. He was determined, he declared, that *the Church should have nothing in common with the Jews*. The movement excited a warm interest in all quarters. Many Councils were held, and innumerable letters were written. Most of the Churches, especially those of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Corinth, Osrhoëne, Pontus, Italy, and Gaul, decreed that the fast of the Holy Week was not to be broken till Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection. On the strength of this general consent, Victor wrote to the Asiatics in a more decided tone, threatening them with excommunication if they held out any longer. But the Quartodecimans, as they were called, headed by Polycrates Bishop of Ephesus, a grey-haired veteran of "slender frame" but mighty spirit, whose family had furnished eight prelates to the Church, unanimously refused to depart from their tradition. Victor proceed to carry out his threat. In this, however, his brother Bishops generally declined to go with him. On the contrary, they rebuked him with much severity; and exhorted him to return to unity and love.

Victor and the Asiatics.

Irenæus, in particular, while he followed the common custom in preference to that in which he had been bred, was urgent in his remonstrances against Victor's course; and wrote to him and to many other distinguished prelates. From his protest on this occasion we learn that there still existed no little diversity, both as to the time and as to the manner of fasting; some observing one day, some two, some more, before the Easter Feast, and some again fasting

Irenæus counsels peace.

forty hours consecutively. This diversity in small matters, Irenæus justly adds, made the unanimity of the Church in more essential things only the more conspicuous.[9]

His death.

Irenæus died, as some say a martyr, when the Church of Lyons was a second time devastated, in the persecution under Severus about the beginning of the third century.

Church growth.

The witness of Irenæus on that most interesting subject, the spread of Christianity in his day, is extremely vague; but we may gather from it, that not only among the Gauls, but among the Germans on the West of the Rhine, the Gospel was successfully preached. His declaration that it was still attended with miraculous demonstrations is somewhat injured by his mentioning no particular example, and by his confining himself to the general statement that such things frequently occurred. He is careful to add, however, that the dæmons when exorcised returned no more; that many relieved from them became good Christians; and that when such acts of mercy were performed, it was done simply by prayer, in the Name of Jesus, without any juggling ceremonial; and in no case would any sort of gift or recompense be accepted. The seriousness with which he dwells on details of this kind is sufficient proof of his own convictions on the subject, but hardly enough to satisfy the demands of modern criticism.[10] It is not improbable, however, that the "gifts" lingered longer on the outskirts of Christian-

Miracles.

[9] For a judicious account of this and similar diversities, see Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* v. 22: also, Sozomen, vii. 19. This latter gives quite a list of peculiarities.

[10] This point is more fully considered in Book iii. ch. 8.

ity in the missionary field, than in regions where the Church was fully established.

Disciples of Irenæus.

The light which Irenæus shed upon the West during the latter part of the second century was transmitted to the first half of the third by two of his disciples: Caius a learned Presbyter, and perhaps an Evangelist or Bishop at large, and Hippolytus still more distinguished as the austere and philosophic prelate of Porto near Rome.

Caius, A.D. 201-219.

Of the former, little remains to warrant the esteem in which he was held by the ancients. He wrote against Proculus, a Montanistic teacher, about the time of Zephyrinus Bishop of Rome, and was an opponent of the Millenarian doctrine, which he ascribes to the heretic Cerinthus.[11]

Hippolytus, A. D. 198-236.

Hippolytus,[12] recently brought into prominent notice by the discovery of his "Philosophoumena" or "Refutation of all Heresies," is almost the embodiment of an interesting phase of early Church history; having been an earnest controversialist, the leader of an opposition party in Rome, and a rigorous censor of the laxity of his times. As Bishop of the Portus Romanus, one of the most important of the six Sees in the immediate neighborhood of the city, he was a prominent and perhaps leading member of that band of suburban prelates called at a later period *cardinales episcopi*, which took the lead in the Roman Presbetery. At all events, he appears as a chief and somewhat dreaded counsellor of the Bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus. To both these he was hostile on theological and disciplinary grounds; accusing them of Patripassianism in doctrine, and of serious innovations in the

Hostility to the Roman Bishops.

[11] Euseb. ii. 25; iii. 28–31. *Refutat. Omn. Hæresium*, lib. ix.
[12] S. Hippolyti, Episc. et Mart. Bunsen's *Hippolytus*.

conduct of Church affairs. His testimony on this subject is highly interesting, as showing the difficulties that involved the leading Bishops in those times. On the one side beset by austere theorizers, rigid in their notions of discipline and keen in doctrinal disputation, and on the other having to maintain the Faith against plausible and subtle speculations of the most opposite descriptions, they were obliged to be somewhat slow and even vacillating in their judgment of the movements of the day. As a general rule, the Bishops of the great Sees, and more especially of Rome, were men of practical and administrative talent, rather than of learning and theological acumen. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they were not always on good terms with their more scholarly advisers; and that the tendency to philosophize on the one side, and perhaps to temporize on the other, should break out occasionally into mutual distrust.

Pastors and Doctors.

As to Hippolytus, he undoubtedly theorized as far as safety would permit. In his dread of the patripassian error, he taught a kind of *subordination* of the Son to the Father, which gave a handle for the charge of *Ditheism*, or a doctrine of two Gods.[13] The charitable construction, which enables us to acquit him of actual heresy in this direction, may be applied with equal force, perhaps, to the alleged opposite leaning of the party of Callistus.[14] The

His position extreme.

[13] His *Veritatis Doctrina*, however, a fine philosophic version of the Creed, addressed to Greeks, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and all mankind, is enough to vindicate his substantial orthodoxy. In it, the distinction between things generated and created is sharply drawn. So, also, the Divinity of the Son. *Refutat. Omn. Hæres.* lib. x. 32, et ss.

[14] The doctrine of Callistus, as stated by Hippolytus, is undoubtedly heretical; being the same substantially as that ascribed to Noëtus. Besides which, the heretical sect of the *Callistians* seem to have got their name from him.

same reasoning applies to his invectives on the relaxation of discipline in the Church. His own notions on the subject were austere and impracticable, suited only to a community of philosophers or monks. His denunciations, therefore, are valuable, as showing the complexity of the questions which the Clergy had to solve, and the bitterness of feeling that necessarily arose, rather than for any very clear light they shed upon the character or principles of the dominant influence in Rome.

His severity.

The peculiar severity of tone, which induces some to suspect him of a leaning towards the Montanists, or to rank him with the Novatians of the latter half of the century, he had in common with the philosophic class to which he belonged. Like his master Irenæus, he favored Chiliasm. Like most of the learned teachers of his times, he made Gnostic views a matter of particular attention, and traced all errors to one or other of the heathen philosophic schools.

His death.

It is said, that before his death he repented of the violence of his conduct, and exhorted his followers to strive for peace. He suffered martyrdom, probably in Rome, during the persecution under Maximin the Thracian.

CHAPTER X.

THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL.

Episcopate.

In the constitution of the Episcopate of Alexandria there seems to have been some departure from the general practice of the Church, the exact nature of which, however, it is not easy to determine. The amplest account of the peculiarity is given by Eutychius, a Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century.[1]

According to Eutychius.

"S. Mark," it is said, "along with Ananias ordained twelve Presbyters, to remain with the Patriarch; so that, when the chair should become vacant, *they might elect one out of the twelve*, on whose head the other eleven should lay their hands, give him benediction, and constitute him Patriarch. This continued at Alexandria till the time of the Patriarch Alexander (A. D. 325) . . . . who forbade the Presbyters in future to ordain their Patriarch, but decreed that on a vacancy of the See the neighboring Bishops should convene for the purpose of filling it with a proper Patriarch, *whether elected from those Presbyters, or from any others.*" Eutychius adds, that during the time of the first ten Patriarchs, there were no Bishops in the rest of Egypt; Demetrius, the eleventh, having been the first to consecrate them.

[1] See Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*, Book i. sect. 1.

According to S. Jerome.

S. Jerome gives substantially the same account; except that he makes no mention of *ordination* by the eleven, and says the change of custom occurred in the times of Heraclas and Dionysius.[2]

One explanation.

In the silence of contemporaries on the subject,[3] and from the vagueness as well as lateness of the testimony given, there is room for the conjecture that Egypt, instead of being divided among several local sees, was governed for a while by a college of twelve chief pastors residing in Alexandria; the Bishop of that See being at their head. Nothing could be more natural than such an arrangement, at the first planting of the Church. In later times, however, as the Gospel extended into the Provinces, it would be found inconvenient, and each important city would desire a resident Bishop of its own. This is the most natural inference, if the language of Eutychius be taken to the letter. For the Presbyters mentioned by him were manifestly Presbyters who had power to ordain; but Presbyters[4] with power to ordain are the same as Bishops, in the restricted sense of the word. As S. Jerome says, in connection with this subject, "What does a Bishop do, *except ordination*, which a Presbyter cannot do?"

Another explanation.

This is said on the supposition that the eleven both elected and ordained their Patriarch. But as

[2] *Epistol. ad Evangelum.*

[3] It is fatal to the theory of any radical, or even marked, change in the Church government of Egypt, that the period in question is covered by the names of Origen, Meletius, and others, who belonged to an *opposition party*, and who certainly would have made themselves heard, if the ruling party had been guilty of any innovations.

[4] It is hardly necessary to remind the reader, that the term Presbyter, like the term Priest, or Sacerdos, was often used as a name for the Ministry in general, and therefore might be applied to any order. 2 John, 1; 3 John, 1; 1 Peter, v. 1.

that point is not certain, resting only on the testimony of a writer manifestly inaccurate in language and living six centuries after the period of which he speaks, the peculiarity of the Church of Alexandria may have been merely that of electing a Bishop out of a close corporation of twelve Presbyters, instead of choosing from the Church at large as was customary in other places.

Demetrius Bishop, A. D. 189.

However that may be, the See of Alexandria was undoubtedly a chief centre of Church life, its influence extending by the end of the third century over a hundred dioceses in Egypt, Pentapolis and Libya. Till the time of Demetrius, however, little is known of its history beyond a list of names. He, it is said, was both a layman and a married man at the time of his election, and totally illiterate. But, addressing himself zealously to the duties of his office, he became by diligent study one of the most learned prelates of his time; and it was during his episcopate that Alexandria, by the brilliant efforts of its philosophic teachers on the one hand, and by the sterling orthodoxy of its clergy on the other, took a decided lead in that work of intellectual progress for which, as we have seen, the period had begun to be distinguished.

Centre of learning.

Considering the character and position of the city it could hardly have been otherwise. To Greek and Hebrew alike,[5] Alexandria was the seat of philosophy

[5] The Alexandrine Jews figure largely in that course of Providential preparation, so wonderfully ordered, by which the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles was secretly undermined, and the way was opened for the spread of the Gospel. The translation of the Old Testament into Greek was one part of their work: the development of a liberal interpretation was another. In this latter point Philo Judæus, born about twenty years before the Christian era, was a valuable instrument. His works are ac-

and learning. It was the congenial home of Gnostic and Platonic dreams; the centre of a liberal and spiritual, though mystic, Judaism. Heathen myths and Scripture verities, by a process of allegorizing fanciful in some respects, but not without a tincture of earnest religious feeling, had been blended, as it were, in a richly colored though bewildering and deceptive light. In the first century, Philo the learned Jew had flourished there. Towards the end of the second century, Ammonius Saccas, who had been a Christian and was more or less imbued with elements of Christian truth, opened a fresh vein of thought in the new Platonic system.[6] Plotinus and others followed in his steps. The school thus founded claimed to be a Religion as well as a Philosophy.[7] It pretended to intuitions of truth, or immediate revelations. It admitted a place for Christ as among the greatest of teachers and theurgists. On the same principle it did not reject, but spiritualized and so labored to justify, the fables of the Greek polytheism. It even endeavored to find a reasonable and religious basis for the generally reprobated but much practiced arts of magic and divination.

Judaic and new Platonic wisdom.

It was amid such influences that the Catechetical School,[8] founded by S. Mark and carried forward, it is said, by the labors of Athenagoras,[9] attained its first celebrity under the auspices of the famous "Sicilian bee," the eclectic philosopher Pantænus.

Pantænus, A. D. 180.

cessible to the English reader in Bohn's Eccl. Library.

[6] Ritter's *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Bk. xiii. Euseb. vi. 19.

[7] See chap. vi. of this Book.

[8] Guericke, *de Schola, quæ olim Alexandr. floruit, Catechetica.*

[9] Originally an Athenian Philosopher. He wrote an *Intercession* for the Christians about A. D. 177, in which he defends them against the charges of atheism, cannibalism and incest. Like most of the philosophic theologians, his notions on many subjects were harsh and impracticable.

Of him, however, little but his distinguished reputation has descended to our times. A deputation from some part of India having come to Demetrius, desiring him to send thither a teacher of Christian truth, Pantænus was deemed worthy of the mission, and departed to that country. There he found some traces of the labors of S. Bartholomew the Apostle, with a Hebrew copy of the Gospel of S. Matthew. He afterwards returned to the school at Alexandria, in the conduct of which he was succeeded by his better known disciple S. Clement.

Mission to India.

To realize the position of this latter, it is necessary to remember that the Catechetical School was an institution intended rather for those without, than for those within the Church. In its simplest form, S. Paul dwelling at Rome in his own hired house, receiving all who came, preaching the Kingdom of God, and speaking of things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ,—or the same Apostle disputing daily at Ephesus in the school of one Tyrannus,—presents, on the whole, a just conception of it. The same may be said of Justin Martyr, who, when he lived at Rome, was always to be found in his own quarters at the Baths of Timotheus, ready to give instruction. In the form it subsequently assumed, we see less of the Gospel preacher, more of the philosophic talker. A Christian man of science, whether of the Laity or Clergy, held himself in readiness to discourse upon all subjects connected with religion: to remove difficulties, to answer questions, to resolve doubts, to prepare the heathen mind, in short, for an intelligent reception of the Gospel. While the School, therefore, dealt with high and sacred themes, it had all the range and freedom peculiar to lay-teaching. Its

Catechetical school.

Lay teaching.

analogy, in modern times, is to be found in the relation of the press to the pulpit; or rather, it may be said, of the University to the Church.

Clement, 189–202.

Clement, a convert from heathenism and a man of encyclopædic learning, who had travelled in all countries, studied in all schools, and profited by all systems,—an eclectic "bee" that sucked honey from every flower, but found the substance of their sweets in "prophetic and apostolic meadows,"—was particularly well fitted by nature and education to carry out this idea. His mission was to the refined and cultivated heathen. Not merely to turn them from idolatry by *Hortatory Appeals;* but *to conduct them* affably and pleasantly, with moral discourses on the way, *to the School* of divine knowledge; to hang that school, as it were, with embroidered *Tapestry-work*:[10] to array Religion in the many-colored robes of a literature and philosophy intellectually attractive,—seems to have been the object he had constantly in view. Hence, though belonging to the priesthood, he mixed up philosophy and religion to an extent that exposed him to much blame. His tabernacle of Christian gnosis was too lavishly adorned with "the spoils of the Egyptians." Israel, indeed, might be the enclosed garden of the Lord, a sacred repository of choice and healing plants. But the great Gentile world was his uninclosed garden. The same Hand created both. The same Spirit breathed in both. The same Divine Word had shed His light on both.

His Mission.

The enclosed and uninclosed garden.

[10] Such seems to be the idea of his three works, which "rise each upon the other in a series or sequence,"—"in imitation, perhaps, of the three degrees of knowledge required by the ancient mystagogues, the *Logos Protrepticos*, the *Pædagogos*, the *Stromata*. In this paragraph I have rather adapted, than translated, some of the innumerable types and tropes, with which in the opening of the *Stromata* the cause of eclectic philosophy is defended.

Yet, as flowers and weeds, grapes and thorns, figs and thistles, had all grown promiscuously in the Gentile soil, the barren or pernicious concealing the fruitful tree from the mere casual observer: it followed that the genuine Christian *Gnostic* must be above all things an Eclectic. His spiritual taste must be educated. He must be accustomed to prove all things, that he may hold fast to what is good. Clement, in short, saw no incompatibility between profane and sacred learning. The former was, in some sense, the handmaid of the latter—perhaps a necessary handmaid. For, as Sarah the mistress was barren, till she had borne a son to Abraham by Hagar, her maid; so the Church, relying on simple faith and abhorring the profane touch of dialectic, philosophic and scientific culture, might find herself in the position of one who expects to gather grapes, without being at the pains to cultivate the vine.[11]

The true Gnostic.

Christian culture.

With views so perilously in advance of the religious sentiment of his times, and which anticipated the broadest modern schemes of liberal education, it is not to be wondered at that Clement's orthodoxy has been, and is still, an open question. That he sometimes used inaccurate expressions with regard to the essentials of the Faith, and that in less important points he advanced many erroneous opinions, is beyond all doubt.[12] On the breaking out of the

Clement's errors.

[11] Even the physical sciences are included in Clement's curriculum. *Stromat.* lib. i.

[12] Bishop Bull defends his substantial orthodoxy. Among the notions imputed to him by Photius, who had a copy (perhaps a corrupted one) of his *Hypotyposes*, now lost, was the theory of several successive creations before Adam. Was this an anticipation of modern geology? See Tillemont, tom. iii. art. 5. For an exact account of his teaching, see Kaye's *Clement of Alexandria*, (John, Bishop of Lincoln,) and Clementis Alex. *Op. omnia Gr. et Lat. ed.* Potter, Oxon. 1715.

Severian persecution he retired before the storm, and defended his course in this particular with arguments full of good sense, but somewhat too elaborate and ingenious. He has been much censured for his advocacy of the *pseudos*, a species of "reserve" or "white lie," in dealing with unbelievers. As a general rule, those who advocate reserve are the least given to it in practice. Clement was hardly an exception to this rule. The "lies" he had in view were that "economy" which dispenses meats and medicines in due measure and due season, and not any such deception as the word taken to the letter might imply.[13] In his system, however, human wisdom undoubtedly had too high a place; and his pretensions to a *gnosis* or secret knowledge, unattainable to the vulgar, savored too much of the arrogance of the Gnostic and new Platonic schools.

His pseudos.

Origen, A. D. 203.

He was succeeded by Origen,[14] the Adamantine, the man of iron soul, whose mind was, as the name *Chalkenteros*[15] suggests, a great thought-factory,—a marvel of rapid, easy, steady, and vigorous operation. He dictated to seven amanuenses, and is said to have been the author of at least six thousand different works. He wrote more, says S. Jerome, than another man could read. As the demand for thoughtful tracts must have been in some proportion to the

[13] See Blunt's *Right Use of the Early Fathers*. While Clement's *meaning* may be defended, his language, it must be confessed, might be made to countenance almost any amount of fraud undertaken with a pious end in view. The same is to be said of some of the expressions of Origen. See notes to Gieseler, § 63.

[14] On the subject of Origen, Eusebius is very full; *Eccles. Hist.* See also Huet's *Origeniana*, and various other disquisitions, appended or prefixed to De la Rue's edition; Origen, *Op. Omn.* etc. Pariss., 1733. For a list of works on Origen, see Fabricii *Bibliothec. Græc.* tom. vii. and Walch, *Bibliothec. Patristic.* p. 273.

[15] S. Jerome so calls him.

supply, there could be no stronger testimony to the wonderful intellectual activity of the times. In his life he was a strict ascetic. Going barefoot at all seasons, owning but one coat, a vegetarian in his diet, and content with such sleep as he could obtain on a bare floor, he devoted his days to teaching, his nights to prayer and study of the Scriptures. He was but eighteen years of age when he began this course. The persecution, before which Clement retired, gave him occupation of a still more honorable kind. Many of his disciples were among the Martyrs and Confessors. He visited them in prison, he stood by them before the tribunal, he comforted and encouraged them in the final conflict. It was unfortunate for him, and for his subsequent good name, that with such unquestionable zeal and self-devotion there was something of the alloy of a presumptuous hardihood. Though still a mere youth when appointed by Demetrius to the Catechetical School, he seems to have taken counsel only of his own heart. Acting, for example, on what he afterwards acknowledged to be a hasty interpretation of the language of our Lord with regard to eunuchs,[16] he prepared many sorrows for himself, many scandals and disturbances for the Church at large. He urged, by way of apology for this act, that there were several females in his school—which exposed him to scandal and temptation. Both the act and the excuse show

His devotion and heroism.

Self-will.

[16] Matt. xix. 12. By his ill-advised act, Origen, according to a wise canon of the Church, (see Apostol. canons, 21–24,) disqualified himself for entering holy Orders. It may be noticed here that bodily blemishes were not made a bar to holy Orders, (Apostolic canons, 77,) unless they were self-inflicted. A deaf or blind man, however, could not be made Bishop—"not as if he was by this made unclean, but lest it be an impediment to him in the duties of his office."

an undue influence of the encratite spirit so prevalent at that time.

His father Leonides.

In such matters, Origen is the less excusable, in that he was a child of many prayers, and of a careful Christian nurture. One of the tenderest images of all antiquity is that of his father, Leonides, rebuking the precocity of his gifted boy, but stealing to his couch when he slept, that he might kiss a breast so manifestly a temple of the Holy Ghost. This excellent father was one of the first victims of the Severian persecution. Origen would gladly have shared his martyrdom; but his mother kept him at home by hiding away his clothes. He managed, nevertheless, to encourage his father by an admirable epistle; in which, referring to his mother and seven children about to be left destitute,[17] he said: "Father, be firm in the Faith, and be not troubled on account of us."

A martyr.

Potamiæna and other martyrs.

One of the beneficial influences of that mixture of religious and secular teaching, which characterized the Alexandrine School, remarkably appeared in the case of Basilides, one of Origen's disciples, but still a heathen and an officer in the army. It fell to him, in the course of the persecution, to conduct the famous Potamiæna to her execution. This noble virgin, equally celebrated for her beauty and her virtue, when all other appeals had failed to daunt her courage, was threatened with the horrible fate

[17] Origen was left in straitened circumstances; but in later life he found a fast friend in Ambrosius, a wealthy layman, whom he reclaimed from the Valentinian heresy, who not only supplied his moderate wants in the way of meat and clothing, but furnished him the means of carrying on his stupendous intellectual labors. During the persecution under Maximin, (A. D. 235,) he had occasion to exhort this noble friend to martyrdom: a wife and children, and large property, being, as he urged, only a greater reason for courage and steadfastness in the faith.

of being given over to the will of the brutal gladiators. To escape this outrage, she uttered some word deemed sacrilegious by the crowd, which brought upon her the penalty of immediate death. Basilides led her away, but showed his sympathy by protecting her from the insults and abuses of the mob. She promised him her prayers, as a reward for his humanity. Not long after her martyrdom, Basilides declared himself a Christian; and relating to the brethren how Potamiæna had appeared to him three successive nights, in a dream, and had placed a crown upon his head, he was duly received, baptized, and shortly after enrolled in the army of the Martyrs. With Potamiæna suffered her mother Macella. The baptism of fire that they received was imparted also to Herais, a female catechumen, another of Origen's disciples. The number of young women of high character who appreciated the teachings of this great master,[18] and many of whom were employed as copyists of his works, is creditable to the state of Christian society at that period.

Basilides.

Of Origen's innumerable intellectual labors it is sufficient to say here, that they were in the direction pointed out by his able predecessors. A disciple of Pantænus and of Clement, a willing hearer of Ammonius Saccas, and full of genius, industry and hardy independence, he could not fail to exert a prodigious influence upon the young mind of his times. His fame was known in the palace, and he corresponded, it is said, with the Emperor Philip. Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus, received lessons in Christianity from his mouth. An Ara-

Origen's gift and labors.

[18] The lectures of Plotinus also, the famous Neo-Platonist, were attended by many female disciples. See Porphyr. *Vita. Plotin.*

bian prince paid him a special visit for the same purpose. He was an object of admiration, also, to the heathen philosophers.[19] On one occasion, at Rome, when he chanced to enter a hall where Plotinus the celebrated Neo-Platonist was lecturing, the latter rose from his seat and declined proceeding before one who, as he declared, knew more than he could tell him.[20] But his most enduring fame, and, as Gregory Thaumaturgus[21] says, his "greatest gift," was in the sphere of "an interpreter of the word of God." He searched with indefatigable zeal for the *mystical*, the *moral*, and the *historic* sense of Scripture;[22] and in each of these departments was some-

His renown.

[19] Porphyry's eulogy is quoted by Eusebius, vi. 19.

[20] Porphyr. *Vit. Plotin.* This, however, may have been another Origen, a heathen philosopher, who was also a disciple of Ammonius.

[21] Who composed an *Oratio Panegyrica in Origenem*, highly esteemed for its glowing eloquence.

[22] Practically only *two* senses; for the *mystic* sense was considered unattainable or only partially attainable to man, in the body: "even the simplest believers know that there are (profound meanings under the letter of Scripture), but *what they are* men of modesty and good sense confess themselves ignorant." Origen cites particularly the story of Lot and his daughters, Abraham and his two wives, the two sisters that Jacob married, the arrangement of the tabernacle, etc., etc.; in which he says, every one can see *some* type or figure, though he who imagines he has found the absolute and fixed meaning is apt to be mistaken. The *three* senses were in reference to the common notion of the threefoldness of man: the *body*, (literal, or historic, sense)—the *soul* (moral sense)—the *spirit* (mystic sense). In some parts of SS. only one, in some two, and in some the three senses may be found. The most objectionable part of Origen's interpretation was, that, in his eagerness to show the necessity of the allegorizing process, he *made* many difficulties in Scripture which do not exist. The cases in which the mystic interpretation is allowable, according to Origen, are: (1) the various details of the ceremonial law; (2) all that is said about Jerusalem, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and other type-cities or type-names; (3) when the letter of Scripture is seemingly trivial, self-contradictory, or (like the Song of Solomon), capable of perversion and misinterpretation. On the *perspective* character of the language of the Old Testament, see Lee on *Inspiration*, etc., Lect. iii. See, also, Peter Daniel Huet's *Origeniana*. Gieseler, *Ch.*

times hurried by his ardor into dangerous extremes. By carefully distinguishing, however, the three senses from one another, he did as much for the cause of grammatical interpretation as for the allegorizing method so popular among the ancients. Enough remains of his labors to justify to posterity the esteem in which he was held. But his Hexapla, a polyglott Bible in six columns, containing the original text in Hebrew and Greek characters, with the four Greek versions of the Seventy, of Aquila, of Symmachus, and of Theodotion, is, with the exception of a few fragments, unfortunately lost.

The Hexapla.

Demetrius, the earnest and sober-minded Pastor of the Alexandrine Church, during whose episcopate this brilliant constellation of teachers appeared in the theological heavens, must have watched its rise and culmination with no little interest, and, perhaps, not without a shade of serious misgiving. However that may be, he for a long time acted with a liberality seldom witnessed in such circumstances among men of his character and position. Why he at length departed from this course has been variously conjectured. Some ascribe it to envy of Origen's growing reputation.[23] Such motives are easy to impute, and to some minds easy to believe. They are difficult to prove, however, even with the advantage of personal or contemporaneous knowledge. Without entering, therefore, into questions of this kind,

Origen and Demetrius.

Hist., § 63, gives Origen full credit for his services to grammatical interpretation. So also Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, § v.

[23] Eusebius, in his extreme partiality for Origen and the Palestine Bishops, is manifestly harsh in his judgment of Demetrius. Many modern writers, though aware that such acts and opinions as those of Origen would have condemned him in the eyes of any Christian body that ever existed, are equally severe upon the action of the Alexandrine Church.

it is enough to notice the fact, that Origen's latter days were clouded by a bitter contention with his Bishop, and with the Church of his native city.

Beginning of the quarrel, A. D. 215.

The quarrel began during a visit of Origen to Palestine, where, on the invitation of Alexander of Jerusalem one of his disciples, and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, he preached in the churches of those prelates. Demetrius remonstrated against this, and Origen was summoned home. About thirteen years after, being invited into Greece, to assist in the refutation of certain heresies which had there obtained a footing, he procured letters commendatory from Demetrius and repaired to that country. Thence, under the sanction of the same letters, he passed into Palestine, where, without consultation or further communication with his Bishop, he was ordained to the priesthood. Demetrius objected to this as a violation of the canons. An angry correspondence followed. The Catechist was refractory; the Bishop uncompromising. The former was defended by the clergy of Palestine. The latter, supported by two councils of the Alexandrine Church, issued a sentence of deposition and excommunication against Origen, on the ground of his false teachings and violations of the canons; an act in which the Roman Church concurred, though Palestine, Arabia, Phenicia and Achaia strenuously opposed it. Undeterred by this, Origen continued his stupendous labors in Cæsarea, in Greece, in Arabia where he confuted and converted the heretic Beryllus, and in other places, with great acceptance and great usefulness to his numerous admirers. Afterwards, under the episcopate of Dionysius, the sentence against him seems to have been remitted, or at least forgot-

Origen condemned, A. D. 231, 232.

ten.[24] He was finally a confessor in the Decian persecution,[25] and died shortly after in the city of Tyre.

Meaning of the quarrel.

Apart from the personalities involved in this controversy, there is much meaning in the course pursued by the Church of Alexandria at so critical a period. On the surface, it may have been a mere quarrel between two leading churchmen. At bottom, it was one important phase of a conflict ever going on between the conservative instinct and the spirit of progress.[26] Origen was a Philosopher, Demetrius a Pastor. The former was large-minded and theoretic, the latter was practical and perhaps narrow-minded. Both of these classes have their uses in the world, but it seldom happens that they thoroughly and cordially understand one another. In the times of Origen, especially, the philosopher's cloak was still a novelty in the Church, and in the eyes of sober shepherds had much of the wolf-skin about it. Demetrius, doubtless, was open to misgivings on this score. So long, however, as Origen taught merely in the character of a religious and philosophic layman, the prudent Bishop might very properly refrain from any hasty interference. In the same way, so long as Origen did not seek to be admitted to the priesthood, there was no occasion for any public censure of the injudicious act by which he had become canonically disqualified for the office. But it was a different case when his conduct and his teaching were to be authorized, as it were, by the seal of holy Orders. Then it became a

Reason for it.

[24] See Huet's *Origeniana*, lib. i. iii. 10.

[25] Book iii. ch. 3.

[26] Neander says, "The outward cause of the controversy was the hierarchical jealousy of Demetrius; but the real ground lay deeper, and outward circumstances only served to bring that hidden cause into public notice, which was the *contrariety* between Origen's Gnostic tendency and the anti-Gnostic." *Hist. of Christian Dogmas.*

matter of indispensable necessity to look more closely into the character of the influence he was so widely and powerfully exerting.

Heresy arrested.

Accordingly this was done. Many of his views were righteously condemned.[27] The Alexandrine School was arrested in a course,[28] which, without some such check, might have made it a mere nest of heretical speculations.

Influence in other quarters.

On the other hand, in the Churches of Palestine where Origen was so warmly encouraged, the way was opened for habits of mind which led in the fourth century to Arian sympathies. His successors in the Catechetical School were Heraclas and Dionysius, both in course of time Bishops of Alexandria; and, towards the end of the century, Pierius and Theognostus. Theodorus, afterwards called Gregory the Wonder-worker, Bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus; his brother Athenodorus; Pamphilus a learned Presbyter of Cæsarea in Palestine, whose name was adopted by Eusebius the Church historian; Firmili-

[27] It has nothing to do with our judgment of Origen's orthodoxy, but deservedly weighs much in our estimate of his Christian character, that he was singularly modest in the expression of his views. For this he is much praised by Huet and others.

[28] As it was, Clement and Origen helped to give a spiritualistic tone to Alexandrine Theology. This was shown (1) in freedom of speculation (against, or beyond Scripture) on such subjects as an endless series of worlds, final salvation or at least salvability of the damned, etherial character of the risen body, etc., etc.; (2) in the emphasis laid on the doctrine of the Logos, and in dangerous theories in relation to that doctrine; (3) in placing all virtue and perfection in *gnosis*, a sort of dispassionate contemplation; (4) in affirming intellectual sins to be worse than moral, etc. The Chiliast, and other sensuous heresies, founded on a too close following of the letter of the Scriptures, were little favored in Alexandria. See Neander, *History of Church dogmas*, and Gieseler, *Church History*, § 63. As Origen's mind was many-sided, his writings also contributed to the rationalistic bias which afterwards showed itself in Palestine and Syria.

anus, the distinguished and able Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and Julius Africanus, one of the earliest of Christian chronographers; were among his disciples or intimate friends. The character of such men is an argument in favor of the essential soundness of their teacher. It is a better argument, however, for the general soundness and conservative and restraining influence of the common sense of the Church. Origen, in fact, both in his faults and in his merits, was considerably in advance of the times in which he lived. Opposition to his teachings was precipitated somewhat by his imprudences of conduct. Yet it hardly began fairly till the end of the third century, when Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, an eloquent but not very judicious writer,[29] opened a controversy that has continued at intervals to be revived with more or less bitterness, down to the present day.

In advance of the age.

[29] He was a martyr in the Diocletian persecution, A. D. 311. His principal work is a eulogium on Virginity in dialogue form, entitled "Banquet of Ten Virgins," some fragments of which remain in Epiphanius and Photius. Eusebius (possibly out of partiality for Origen) makes no mention of him.

BOOK III.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCHES,

AND

FIRST TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

A. D. 200–324.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

NORTH AFRICAN CHURCH.

North Africa.

The African Church, a name not including Egypt, Cyrene, or any of the dependencies of the See of Alexandria, had in the course of the second century extended the influence of the Gospel over two of the three great provinces of Northern Africa.[1] Its territorial limits embraced ultimately Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, and Mauritania. In these were some three thousand towns and villages, with a mixed population of Romans, Greeks, Jews, and Africans both of Punic and indigenous race.

Character of the people.

It was a vast and fertile region, rich in commercial and agricultural resources, stocked with innumerable slaves,[2] and haunted at the commencement of the Christian era by a prolific brood of abominable superstitions. In this respect it was, even more than Rome or Alexandria, a sink of the whole world.[3] Each race which had settled in the country

[1] Münteri *Primordia Eccles. African.* See also Schelstrate, *Eccles. Afric.*; and Morcelli *Africa Christiana.*

[2] Apuleius mentions that there were four hundred slaves on *a portion* of his wife's property: Apuleii *Apolog.* p. 333. Elmenh.

[3] In Afris pene omnibus, nescio quid non malum . . . *inhumani* . . . *ebriosi* . . . *fallacissimi* . . *fraudulentissimi* . . . *cupidissimi*

had brought in with it its own peculiar rites; and each imported rite the prurient imagination of Africa had invested with new horrors. Human victims were sacrificed to Baal, under the Roman name of Saturn. Maidens were devoted, amid lewd songs and games and lascivious rites, to the *Vesta Meretricum*, the Syrian Astarte. Magical rites, divination, necromancy, fetish-worship, had of course grown apace in so rank a soil. Nor were the morals of the people better than their religion. Cruelty, treachery and lust were national characteristics. A fanatical self-devotion, blood-thirsty, gloomy, insatiable in its greed for horrors, swayed the soul alternately with a frivolity hardly more human. So that, notwithstanding the strong bridle of Roman law, and the so-called civilizing influences of baths, theatres, and temples, the Cross, it is likely, was never set up on more unpromising ground.

Superstitions.

When evangelized.

Who the first Evangelists were, and whence they came, is a question involved in no little obscurity. There is a confused tradition of Pentecostal voices, sounding their glad tidings along the coasts, or even in the interior; and a vague rumor connects this early preaching with the names of Simon of Cyrene, Simon Zelotes, or, as some would have it, Simon Peter himself. Such traditions in themselves are of little value. It is not improbable, however, that some straggling rays of the great Pentecostal light had visited the Jews in this, as in all other parts of the Roman world; and a few believers, gathered as

. . . *perfidissimi* . . . quis nescit, Africam totam obscœnis libidinum tædis semper arsisse? non ut terram ac sedem hominum, sed ut Ætnam putes impudicarum fuisse flammárum, etc., etc. Salvian. *de Provident.*, lib. vii. For much more to the same effect see that very satisfactory book, Morcelli *Afric. Christian.*

in other places from among them or their proselytes, may have formed a connecting link between Africa and the *matrix religionis*, the mother Church at Jerusalem.

Church established.

However this may be, the African Church could lay no claim to a strictly Apostolic origin. The Carthaginian fleet that sailed annually to Rome with a supply of corn, returned some time about the beginning of the second century with a more precious freight; and Roman missionaries established an Episcopal See at Carthage.

Its special interest.

As the African Church was thus among the latest to begin its course, Carthage being almost the only important See to which the phrase *sine charta et atramento*[4] could not be applied: so its career was in many respects the most rapid and most brilliant. It gave to the world a Tertullian, a Cyprian, and an Augustine, the three principal teachers of Western Christianity; and among minor writers, Minucius Felix, Arnobius and Lactantius. A still greater interest attaches to its history from the fact that the ante-Nicene period covers both its rise and the commencement of its decline. For though it afterwards continued to exist, and to exert a certain influence till the time of the Mohammedan invasion, yet its latter years, oppressed by a foreign yoke and embittered by barbarous dissensions, exhibited little more than the melancholy symptoms of a slow but inevi-

[4] The phrase is applied by S. Irenæus to barbarous nations, which had to receive the Truth orally, before they could be taught to read the Scriptures. Carthage received the Truth and the Scriptures simultaneously; which may account for the disposition among the Africans to use Scripture and tradition as synonymous terms. It also explains why, when looking for customs or traditions not contained in Scripture, they turned to Rome, as *auctoritas præsto*—a witness close at hand.

table decay. This Church, then, as being not a planting merely, but as it were a ripened fruit of the first age of Christianity, seems to merit a larger space in this section of our history than can be accorded to others, whose importance, though eventually much greater, was of somewhat later date.

Its growth. Of its growth during the second century little is positively known. About the end of that period it comes suddenly into light: strong in faith, as witnessed by the martyrdom of the Scillitans in the Severian persecution; strong in numbers and organization, for at a council holden in Carthage, under Agrippinus the Primate of North Africa, as many as seventy Bishops were present, representing the

A. D. 215. two Provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Numidia. It was in this Council that all baptisms administered

A. D. 230. by heretics were declared invalid. A little later, the same stand was taken by many Churches in the East, especially in the great Council of Iconium.

Scillitan martyrs, A. D. 202. The Scillitan martyrs were among the first who suffered for the faith in North Africa. To the simplicity of their religion, which they pleaded and labored to commend to the Proconsul Saturninus, he opposed what he regarded as a still more simple creed.[5] "Swear," says he, "by the genius of the Emperor." He seems to have been somewhat anxious to save them, if he could, from the extreme penalty of the law; and offered them for this purpose a respite of thirty days. The Scillitans, however, knew no path but the straight one. "Honor," they said, "they were always ready to give to the Emperor: but honor with prayer belonged to God only."

[5] *Acta Proconsularia Martyrum* *ann.* ccii; given also in Münteri *Scillitanorum;* Baronius, *Annal.* *Primordia.*

They were sent back to prison to reconsider their resolve. But firm against the threats and deaf to the suggestions of the good-natured magistrate, twelve persons in all, nine men and three women, were beheaded; giving thanks to God for His grace in allowing them to be enrolled in the glorious army of His martyrs. The kind of punishment inflicted in this case is an indication that the Scillitan witnesses, and perhaps the majority of believers in that region, belonged to the Latin part of the North African population.

Heathen cruelties.

The persecution of the Christians, though commenced under a certain show of law, soon fell into the hands of an excited populace, and was marked by all the usual features of diabolical cruelty and malice. The Christians were accused of incredible abominations. Their assemblies were represented to be the scenes of such orgies as heathenism unhappily had made familiar to men's minds, though in a purer state of society they could hardly have been imagined. The punishments were in keeping with the imputed crimes. By a refinement of barbarism, not unknown elsewhere, but which seems to have originated in Africa, Christian virgins, whom the cry *ad leones* could not daunt, were condemned to the vile service of the infamous *lenones*.[6] Such outrages were naturally regarded as signs of Antichrist. It is not to be wondered at that they engendered in some minds a gloomy, or at all events visionary, temper, alien to the spirit of sober and true religion.

Signs of Antichrist.

[6] Tertullian mentions such a case in the last chapter of his *Apologet.* Cyprian alludes to it as a custom: "virgines, venientis Antichristi minas, et corruptelas, et *lupinaria*, non timentes."—*De Mortal.* In the later persecutions such cases became quite common.

Enthusiasm.

Many circumstances conspired to foster such a spirit, both among the Christians and among their idolatrous and savage persecutors. The first blood shed had been followed by floods, tempests, meteors, subterranean thunders, and an extraordinary eclipse of the sun. By portents of this kind a fanatical temper was excited among the heathen, who attributed all calamities to the anger of their gods insulted by the Christians. On the other hand, the common Christian hope of the coming of the Lord was more vivid in times of peril, and sometimes degenerated into a morbid superstition. In a healthy state of mind, believers always prayed for the safety of the Empire, and *pro mora finis:* for a longer continuance, that is, of the world's season of repentance. It was a symptom of a dangerous enthusiasm, when to some, in their confident and exultant expectation of the end, this charitable prayer became unmeaning or distasteful.[7]

Prayer pro mora finis.

Sensuous bias.

From causes of this kind the enthusiasm of Montanus, already rife in many portions of the West, and naturally suited to the sensuous temper of the African and Africo-Roman mind, found in Carthage and its dependencies a soil peculiarly fitted for its reception. This may be seen to some extent, even in that noble sample of the records of martyrdom, the Passion of S. Felicitas and S. Perpetua.

Perpetua.

Perpetua, a young matron of high social advantages, about twenty years of age at the time when she was called to suffer for the testimony of Christ,

[7] Montanistic Tertullian, e. g., finds fault with some, because "*protractum quendam sæculo postulant*, cum regnum Dei, quod ut adveniat oramus, ad consummationem sæculi tendat." *De Orat.* 5. See, also, that fearful outburst so often cited against the early Church,—*de Spectaculis*, c. 30—"Quale spectaculum, etc."

had an infant at her breast. She was obliged to withstand, moreover, the passionate threats and entreaties of a doting father. She pointed the latter, with a somewhat provoking calmness, to a pitcher in the cell. "Father," she asked, "what do you call that vessel?" "A pitcher," he replied. "But can you say that it is not a pitcher?" "Of course," said he, "I can not." "Then it is equally impossible for me to say that I am not a Christian." The old man left her in a fit of impotent rage and phrensy. At another time, when he came in "to cast her down," and in tears addressed her "not as daughter but as lady," she was deeply grieved because of his grey hairs, and "because he was the only one of her family that did not rejoice at her affliction;" and she comforted him, saying: "Nothing can happen at the tribunal, but what God wills; for know, that we are not in our own power, but in the hand of God." He withdrew from her, however, overwhelmed with sorrow.

Trials.

Grief of her father.

A few days after the first interview, the prisoners were baptized. On that occasion Perpetua was inspired to ask nothing of God but the grace of bodily endurance. Still, the gloom and stifling heat of the jail were almost insupportable; and she was pining with anxiety for her half-famished babe. The Deacons managed to get them a few hours of recreation out of doors. The infant was allowed to stay in prison with its mother. When she was relieved of this subject of anxiety, "the prison immediately became to her a Pretorian palace; so that she would rather have been there than in any other place."

Baptism in jail.

Felicitas, a slave, was great with child. As the law forbade one in this condition to be put to death,

Felicitas.

she was dreadfully afraid that she might not be allowed to share the martyrdom of her companions. But she was delivered in prison before her time, and was thenceforth full of joy. As she had exhibited any thing but fortitude when taken with the pains of travail, one of the jailors said to her: "If you make such an ado now, what will become of you, I pray, when thrown to the wild beasts?" She answered: "It is I who suffer now; at that time Another shall be in me, who will suffer for me, as I for Him." Some good-hearted Christian woman adopted the little innocent thus brought into the world.

Dreams and visions.

The captives found favor with their jailors, and were visited by crowds of sympathizing friends. Blessed Deacons ministered to their wants. Doctors deemed it an honor to fall down at their feet. They were cheered, moreover, by ecstacies and visions. The celestial ladder, with a great dragon at its foot, and bristling on either side with swords and knives and hooks, led Perpetua to a garden, wherein sat the good Shepherd milking his ewes. Myriads robed in white were standing in shining rows about Him. "Welcome, child," was His address to Perpetua, as He gave her a bit of cheese.[8] She received the gift with joined hands; the bystanders responded with a loud "Amen;" by all which she understood, that the end was rapidly approaching, and cheerfully put aside all thoughts of the present life. In another dream, Dinocrates, her young brother, who had

[8] This seems to indicate a sympathy with some of the Montanist notions. See Gieseler, § 59, note 9. The peculiarity of the *Artotyrites*, who attached a mystic meaning to bread and cheese, may have existed before a sect was formed on those peculiarities.

perished of a cancer at the age of nine years, was delivered by her prayers[9] from the place of torment where she saw him.

In other visions the disorders of the times were unsparingly rebuked. The loquacity of the Africans, gathering noisily around their Bishop, was compared to the wrangling of a crowd of heathen just coming out of the circus. The day before the execution, the prisoners were allowed a *free banquet;* an indulgence usually granted to persons condemned to death. They availed themselves of the opportunity, to celebrate the Agape or feast of love. The crowd, who gathered around from motives of curiosity, were commanded to take good note of the features of the victims, that they might be sure to recognize them at the Day of Judgment. Some were exasperated at these appeals. Upon others the evident sincerity of the confessors was not without effect. Rebukes.

When the final conflict came, the better feelings of the crowd so far prevailed as to spare the martyrs the profanation of appearing in the robes of Ceres and of Saturn, which it had been intended they should wear. "To preserve our liberty," said Perpetua, "we freely give our lives. See ye to it, that the bargain be not broken." The populace admitted the justice of the appeal. In a less commendable spirit, some of the male confessors addressed the Final conflict.

[9] On the efficacy of prayers for the dead, there were not precise notions, even among the more learned Christians. Among ordinary believers, it is likely, there were very loose views. The only prayers of the kind ordinarily sanctioned, however, were *pro dormitione;* e. g., "A wife," according to Tertullian, should "pray for the soul of her deceased husband, that the twain may be reunited at the first resurrection (the millennium), and that in the mean time he may have *refrigerium*"—a quiet and refreshing rest: *ad Uxor.* See Abp. Usher, *Ans. to Chall. of a Jesuit,* c. 7.

spectators, and especially Hilarian the Proconsul, with threatening looks and gestures; for which they were ordered to be scourged. But it added to their joy, that their sufferings were thus made to conform more nearly to the Passion of the Lord. Finally, each underwent the death he had had the grace to pray for. Saturninus, according to a desire he had more than once expressed, was exposed to the fury of all the wild beasts. Saturus had a particular horror of a bear, and the bear to which he was thrown refused to come near him. He was at last attacked by a leopard; and as the blood gushed out, the populace shouted in derision of the Christian belief in the efficacy of martyrdom, *Salvum lotum, salvum lotum:* he who was thus *baptized* being regarded as sure of his own salvation. The women, in consequence perhaps of the popular exasperation which the men had somewhat needlessly provoked, were divested of all their clothing, and hung up in nets to be tossed by wild cows. But at the sight of them in this condition, the crowd once more relented. They were allowed to clothe themselves. Perpetua, surviving the first attack of the infuriated animal, was conscious enough to draw her robe over the parts of her person exposed, and to bind up her hair; but seemed otherwise as one just awaking from a dream. When told what she had suffered, she said to her brother and to a certain catechumen: "Stand fast in the faith, love one another, and be not offended at what we endure." With the others who had survived the fury of the beasts, she was finally despatched with the sword. The rest received the fatal stroke in silence. Perpetua was woman enough to shriek as the weapon pierced her

Answer to prayer.

Salvum lotum.

side; but, immediately recovering, guided the hand of the trembling gladiator to a more mortal spot. Perhaps, adds the notary, the unclean spirit was afraid of her; and, without her own consent, so noble a lady could not have been put to death. Death of Perpetua.

The beautiful narrative[10] from which these incidents are gleaned, was written in part by Perpetua herself; the preface and conclusion being added by a coarser hand. Some touches in it betray, as has been said, a Montanistic bias. That the writer of the preface sympathized with the new prophets, there can be no question. "The Spirit," he observes, "was not poured forth upon early times only. The older the world is, the more novel and more startling the demonstrations of His power. And in the latest times of all, the more manifestly must appear the truth of the prediction, that the young men shall see visions and the old shall dream dreams." That these "latest times of all" were actually appearing, was a common and natural feeling amid the horrors of persecution. Hence an eagerness for martyrdom, passing the bounds of sobriety. Hence a fondness for ecstacies and visions, and an austerity of temper which sometimes clouded, without obscuring altogether, the simplicity and reality of the martyr's faith. Montanist bias. Fondness for visions.

It was probably about this time that Tertullian,[11] himself an epitome of the African religious mind, conceiving a great disgust at the laxity and worldliness which he had witnessed among the Roman and Tertullian, nat. A. D. 135, ob. A. D. 217.

[10] *Passio SS. Perpetuæ et Felicitatis atque Sociorum;* given in Münter's *Primordia Ecc. Af.*

[11] Qu. Septimius Florens Tertullianus; on this subject see Kaye's *Tertullian;* Neander's *Antignosticus;* and Tertullian. *Op.* etc. Nic. Rigalt. 1689.

other Christians, boldly took the part of the "spirituals," as they called themselves, against the easier and more indulgent views of the "carnal" Catholics.

Question of veils.

There was a question, for example, as to the propriety of virgins being seen unveiled. The majority of the Church were content to let "custom" decide in matters of this kind. The stricter party were disposed to condemn the custom as scandalous and indecent, a sin against nature and the law of God. For awhile, the question was agitated without any serious breach of peace. At length, however, the contest day by day becoming more bitter, the unveiled virgins, or "virgins of men" as they were called, began to be "offended" at "the virgins of God," and the latter, perhaps, were scandalized in turn; so that things were tending fast to an open rupture.[12]

Question of the crown.

Or, to take another instance, a Christian soldier had on a certain holiday declined to wear the chaplet, usually worn on such occasions in honor of the Emperor.[13] The Spirituals approved. The more compliant Catholics regarded the man as scrupulous to excess, and even blamed him for exposing his brethren to needless persecution. Tertullian threw himself eagerly into these and similar quarrels of the day. A Roman by blood, a lawyer by education, but African and atrabilious in his temper; full of genius moreover, intensely sensuous and realistic, more eager than reverential in his passionate devotion to the Truth, yet deeply and at times tenderly

[12] Tertull. *de Veland. Virgin.* 2, 3.

[13] *De Corona;* in which tract Tertullian advocates unwritten tradition almost as heartily, as in the tract *de Veland. Virginibus* he inveighs against it. In the one case custom was on his side, in the other not. See Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doc.*, § 84. (Buch's Tr.)

solicitous for the souls of men: he had seen much in Rome and Carthage to put him out of temper with the Christianity of the day, and to make him look habitually on the dark side of things. To idealize the past into a sort of golden age, needs only a vivid imagination, or a feeble sense of facts. To see good in the present is a much harder task. It requires a supernatural gift of charity and patience. But in this virtue of patience, Tertullian, as he more than once acknowledged, was particularly deficient. It must be confessed, however, that by the end of the second century there were already facts in Christianity which good and earnest men found difficult to digest.

Past and Present.

The old landmarks betwixt the Church and the world were undergoing a gradual but visible removal. The believer and the infidel had, in the innocent customs of society,[14]—in dress, in fashion, in amusements, in social freedom,—an amount of common ground which was every day enlarging, and which, by a convenient distinction between precepts of obligation and counsels of perfection, might admit of such an extension as to make Christian and Heathen ethics substantially the same. In morals, as in doctrine, the Apostolic ship was much covered by the waves; the Apostolic net had many rents in it. This decline was rebuked, but not remedied, by the followers of Montanus. These and other ascetics, by appropriating the term *spiritual* to themselves, and the term *psychical* or *carnal* to the mass of their

Decline of discipline.

Party names.

[14] At this period converts were made in great numbers among the wealthy middle class. In Alexandria, especially, Clement (*Pædagogus*) found it necessary to inveigh against dresses, jewels, trinkets of every sort, rare birds, monkeys, lap-dogs, and other luxuries that defrauded orphans and widows of their just support.

Christian brethren, had caused both to be regarded as mere party words. And when religious phrases come thus to be perverted into shibboleths of party, their authority over the conscience is in a great measure lost.

Spirituals and Psychics.

Tertullian, however, was too earnest a man to join in the ridicule which the inflated pretensions of the Spirituals had drawn upon them. He saw in them the advocates of a return to stricter ways. Their lives compared favorably with the somewhat frivolous behavior tolerated among Catholics. They seemed to be reformers. And their wonderful success,—for the influence of Montanism had spread with a rapidity that seemed to rival the first effusion of Pentecostal light,—gave plausibility to the claim of a special demonstration of spiritual Power.

Tertullian's party, A. D. 201.

Under these circumstances, persuaded by Proculus a Montanistic leader, and influenced by the favor shown in Rome to Praxeas the Patripassian, Tertullian undertook, as he expresses it, *the defence of the Paraclete, and so became separated from the Psychics*, or Catholics. But it was not in his nature to be a mere follower in a sect. The heartiness and boldness which estranged him from one party, made him in time a separatist from the other. He and his co-religionists in North Africa became, in fact, Tertullianists rather than Montanists. The congregation lingered, though gradually diminishing in numbers, till the times of S. Augustine;[15] when, at last, "the few who remained came back into the Church, and transferred their Basilica to the care of the Catholics."

How Tertullian and his party were regarded by

[15] S. Augustin. *ad Quodvultdeum. Hæres.* 86.

the orthodox of Carthage is not quite clear. He was condemned in Rome; he was anathematized, perhaps, by one of the Carthaginian Councils.[16] Still, a kindly feeling seems to have subsisted between him and the great body of the Church. His followers also experienced some indulgence. Fasting strictly and frequently, abhorring second marriages, insisting more than others upon clerical celibacy, shunning the fashions and amusements, and so far as possible the business of the world, looking with scornful pity upon the compliances and evasions of a carnal Catholicism, and fortifying themselves in all this by dreams, ecstacies and visions, with a lively hope of the speedy manifestation of the heavenly Jerusalem, they had too strong a hold upon the sympathies of believers to be easily or suddenly separated from them. In the course of time, however, they became more sour; and it was from the bitter root of Phrygian enthusiasm that sprang some of the wildest errors of North African religion.

His position.

But in the meanwhile, Tertullian had gained a place in the affections of all parties, from which no anathema has been able to dislodge him. *Fuit in ecclesia magna tentatio*, says Vincent of Lerins: his position in the Church was indeed a great trial. By his plastic genius, and ready and rough vigor, he almost created the religious language of the West. He was a mighty champion for the Faith, against the subtle rationalism of Praxeas whom he forced to retract his errors, and against the Gnostic views of

His influence.

[16] A sentence in his tract, *de pudicit.*—"ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non *ecclesia numerus episcoporum*"—is generally supposed to have been aimed at some Council that had condemned him.

Marcion, Hermogenes, Apelles and other disturbers of the times. He is the exponent of that mighty struggle against sin, that deep and earnest sense of the necessity of grace, that intense realism and individualism in matters of religion, which has remained characteristic of the Western mind. His unquestionable services to the cause of orthodoxy, and still more to the cause of religious earnestness,[17] were no doubt appreciated by the mass of his countrymen; and atoned in their eyes, as they have atoned in the eyes of posterity, for a multitude of philosophic and theologic errors.

Religious earnestness.

But it happened with this great master, as with the equally great Origen in the East, that the Church spirit of his times proved stronger than the influence of any individual spirit. The disciples of Tertullian, and especially S. Cyprian and S. Augustine, appreciated his merits without following him in his errors.[18]

The Church stronger than the Schools.

[17] Tertullian's mind was thoroughly anti-gnostic, and his bias diametrically opposite to that of the Alexandrine doctors. His conceptions were sensuous in the extreme. Thus among his paradoxes he maintained, that *God is corporeal*—being unable to conceive that any thing without body could exist (which, however, was probably nothing more than a rough way of asserting the personality of God); that *Christ* (when he appeared to the Patriarchs) and *the Angels* were *clothed in flesh;* that *souls are propagated* with the body *ex traduce*, and are themselves corporeal; that *wicked souls become demons after death*, etc. From the same turn of mind he conceived of the grace of baptism as lodged in *the water*, to which he ascribed a sort of magical operation—the water being, as it were, transubstantiated. Expressions of this kind scattered over his works are capable of a charitable and orthodox interpretation; but they show, none the less, the peculiarity of his mind. (It would be easy to show that the same bias has pervaded and still pervades the Western mind generally.) His practical turn is seen in a mere enumeration of his writings—about *shows, idolatry, marriage, prayer, baptism, female apparel, veils, crowns, fasts*, etc., etc. In treating all such matters he took the austere side, but was as sensuous *against* abuses as others were *for* them. See Neander's *Antignosticus*. For Tertullian's paradoxes, see Essay of Pamel. prefixed to his Works.

[18] They partook not a little, however, of his peculiar bias.

He exerted an influence upon the doctrinal development of his day, but he did not control it.

A season of peace. A. D. 211.

With the death of Severus, the persecution in Africa, as elsewhere, ceased. An interval of forty years of peace, occasionally interrupted by temporary outbreaks, allowed the good seed and the bad to grow up together. The Church extended itself into the remoter Province of Mauritania. Councils were held, some of them attended by as many as ninety Bishops; in one of which Privatus, probably a Bishop, was condemned for some heresy unknown.

Sects.

For the rest, Gnostic or Montanistic sects, unmolested so far as we can learn by a succession of indulgent and not very able Bishops, contended for the right of women to teach; or endeavored to make sense of the incoherent utterances of the ecstatic prophetesses; or, in the picturesque language of the times, killed the fish of Christ by forbidding them the water; or used water instead of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; or cultivated peculiarities of posture and of gesture; or railed, as occasion served, against Bishops and other rulers.[19]

Spirit of the world.

On the whole, there seems to have been much of mutual forbearance. The Canons passed in Councils were directed mainly against the encroachments of a worldly spirit. That Bishops, Priests and Deacons were not to engage in secular affairs; that the sons of clergymen were not to marry among infidels or

[19] Of the *Aquarians, Quintillans, Artotyrites,* and other absurd sects, little beyond the name is known. It is probable enough, however, that as the Montanists and Gnostics became more and more divided, they departed further from the customs of the Church; so that the decree of the council under Agrippinus, requiring converts from them to be *baptized,* was a necessary precaution;—the rite being either neglected, or improperly performed.

Drift of Church Laws.

heretics; that no one should be ordained till he had made Catholic Christians of his own household; that virgins, deprived of their natural guardians, should be committed to the care of grave elderly females: these, and similar laws, show the drift of the legislation and of the temptations of the times. Of other matters, beyond occasional names added probably through popular violence to the roll of Martyrs, so little record remains, that until the reign of the Emperor Decius and the troubled episcopate of S. Cyprian, the thread of African Church history becomes almost invisible.

CHAPTER II.

CARTHAGE AND S. CYPRIAN.

Cyprian Bishop. A. D. 248.

When Cyprian,[1] a convert from heathenism, and a man of wealth, education and high social standing, rose by rapid steps from the grade of a catechumen to that of the Episcopate of Carthage and the Primacy[2] of North

[1] At his baptism he adopted the name Cæcilius in gratitude to an aged Presbyter of that name, who had been instrumental in his conversion; so that his full name reads *Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus*. His life, or rather his eulogy, was written by Pontius, his deacon; but his public acts are to be found in a more authentic form in his own spirited writings. See Poole, *Life and Times of S. Cyprian;* S. Cæcil. Cyprian. *Op. Omn.* à Joanne Fello—accedunt *Annales Cyprianici* a Joanne Pearson. et *Dissertationes Cyprianic.* Henric. Dodwell. Amstelodam. 1700. Cypriani *Op. Genuina,* Goldh. Lips. 1838.

[2] In the days of Agrippinus, (A. D. 215,) there seems to have been but one primate in North Africa. By the middle of the century there were three, Carthage, however, still holding the first place. The primacies of Numidia and Mauritania were attached to no particular See, but were given to the oldest

Africa, he found the Church, from causes already alluded to, in a state of considerable disorder.

State of the Church.

A factious spirit extensively prevailed, and scandals were rife among Laity and Clergy. The Virgins and Confessors,—regarded more and more as the flower of Christianity, and treated for that reason with a perilous indulgence,—were not a little crazed by the flattery, which even the Bishops, when they ventured to reprove them, could not prudently withhold.

Bad conduct of the Virgins.

Of the Virgins, some were petulant in behaviour and immodest in attire.[3] So far from veiling themselves from the gaze of a profane world according to the strict notions of Tertullian, they seem to have been living almost without rule. They wasted their time; they spent their money capriciously; they dressed and painted to such excess that, "when God looked for the faces of His elect, He saw only the false colors and gewgaws of the devil." Others of them became notorious as gossips. They were wont to gad about from house to house; and delighted in the wanton merry-makings which African society tolerated and encouraged at marriage feasts. Some preferred the heathen to the Christian rule of decency, and did not scruple to be seen among the unblushing rabble of both sexes that frequented the public baths. Their manners, in short, were not only scandalous, but—from a modern point of view, and without reference to the omnipotence of fashion in determining questions of decorum—they might be

Bishops. For the powers of the Primate, (which were strictly limited), see Münter. *Primord.* ix. 2.

[3] S. Cyprian. *de habitu Virgin.* In this and the following paragraphs I follow S. Cyprian and Tertullian, though the ardent censors of the vices of an age are not always good authority as to the extent of the prevalence of those vices.

thought inconsistent with any sense at all of Christian obligations.

Motives to Virginity.

The Virgins, in fact, had in very many cases mistaken their calling. Under all the circumstances of the times, it was natural enough that this should be frequently the case. Virginity was not only an honorable state: it was free from care. At a time when households were divided on the subject of religion, and when, owing to the ubiquitous pressure of a filthy but to young persons fascinating idolatry,[4] the rearing of children in Christian habits presented difficulties without number:[5] domestic life was often a bitter servitude; marriage involved the gravest

Its perils.

perils and temptations; and celibacy was regarded as not only more safe to the individual, but more fruitful to the Church,[6] than any other condition. It was popular on prudential as well as on enthusiastic grounds. It was sought, therefore, with avidity by some who had no natural fitness for it. But being sought thus, it was in many cases abused. Its freedom from care became an occasion of perilous self-indulgence. Its dignity ministered to vanity and pride. Even its purity was by a strange freak of conscience regarded as an athletic or agonistic vir-

[4] S. Augustine *de civitat. Dei*, ii. 26, draws a frightful picture of the obscenities of heathen worship.

[5] Hence Tertullian's main objection to infant-baptism. Of the *servitude* incident to domestic life in semi-heathen society, the same writer speaks feelingly in many places: *Apologet.* 3; *ad uxor.* ii. 4, 6. To heathen husbands, the *antelucan* meetings were particularly offensive. Says Apuleius: Tunc (mulier) spretis atque calcatis divinis numinibus, in vim certæ religionis, mentita sacrilega præsumptione *Dei quem* prædicaret *unicum*, *confictis observationibus vanis*, fallens omnes homines, et miserum maritum decipiens, *matutino mero* et continuo stupro corpus mancipat.

[6] In illis largiter floret ecclesiæ matris gloriosa fœcunditas: S. Cypr. *de habit. virgin.*

tue, the more perfect in proportion as it challenged or solicited temptation.

Confessors.

From similar causes, the insolence of some of the Martyrs or Confessors had become another crying sin of the times.[7] No Bishop or Presbyter, nor so far as we can learn any other distinguished person, had so far suffered in North Africa.[8] The victims, therefore, it is probable, were too often of that class which courted persecution.[9] But they were none the less objects of popular and feminine idolatry. Their wounds and stripes were badges of honor. They went in and out as a privileged class. And as their ranks, even in times of peace, were constantly recruited through the wantonness of the mob and the culpable indifference of the magistrates, they became a sort of irregular third power, having an influence as great as that of the Clergy, without a corresponding sense of responsibility and duty. The evil was increased by the popular belief that martyrdom, or in its degree confessorship, was a plenary atonement for every kind of sin.

Their influence.

Sisters of the clergy.

To what extent worse vices obtained among a certain portion of the Clergy, and among that class of devotees, male or female, married or unmarried, who

[7] Tertullian thus indignantly sums up the powers granted by Zephyrinus Bishop of Rome to these Confessors: At tu jam et in Martyres tuos effundis hanc potestatem, ut quisque ex consensione vincula induit, adhuc mollia in novo custodiæ nomine, statim ambiunt mœchi statim adeunt fornicatores, jam preces circumsonant, ... et inde communicatores revertuntur, etc. The insolence, tyranny, and presumption, that naturally followed, are fully seen in S. Cyprian's Epistles.

[8] So says Deacon Pontius in his life of S. Cyprian.

[9] The quiet way in which Hippolytus describes the effort of Callistus to recover his credit among the brethren, by making a disturbance in a Jewish Synagogue and thus exposing himself to martyrdom, shows that cases of that kind were not uncommon. See chap. 4 of this Book.

set up their chastity as an idol of vain-glory, and took a giddy pleasure in hanging over the pit from which they professed to have escaped, it is needless to inquire: the cases actually mentioned by early writers being few in comparison with the severity of their strictures on the subject.[10] The *subintroductæ*, virgins who lived as sisters with unmarried priests, were a nuisance against which sermons, canons, and anathemas were for a long time ineffectual. In despite of all precautions, the Agape, a most beautiful but alas! a most vulnerable feature of the early Church system, was accompanied with disorders which even at this period broke out from time to time, and which at length led to intolerable abuses. In Tertullian's day such evils were deeply felt. In S. Cyprian's they had to be deplored *cum summo animi gemitu et dolore*.[11]

The Agape abused.

In excesses of this kind there was probably less of intentional hypocrisy than of enthusiastic self-deception. Conscience, like the needle in the compass, is true to its trust only in a certain equilibrium of the soul. In the condition of the early Church, at certain periods, there was much to disturb this even balance, and to bring on a state of mind in which extravagance and absurdity became more or less the test of religious earnestness and reality.

Self deception.

[10] That the abuse was an obstinate one, however, is shown by the number of canons that had to be framed against it: I *Carthaginiens.* can. 3; II, can. 17; IV, can. 46; *Nicæn.* can. 3; *Ancyran.* can. 19. See Dodwell. *Dissertat. Cyprian.* iii.

[11] Tertull. *de Jejun. adv. Psychic.* 17: S. Cyprian *Ep.* vi. Pariss. Tertullian, however, in his Apolog. (39), written when he was still a Catholic, tells a different story. In the one case he looked upon the Church with an Apologist's eye, in the other, with that of a censor: in the one case he considered the general aspect of things, in the other he was looking at particular defects. The most philosophic as well as the most charitable judgment is that which is made from the former point of view.

It is not improbable, however, that there were those among the Africans, whose hypocrisy was of a cooler and more calculating kind. Avarice had its place among the vices of the Clergy. There was much traffic in sacred things. In the strong and wholesome language of the most eminent censor of the times, the serpent, condemned to eat dust and to crawl upon the ground, had dragged many priests with him into the same degradation. Some were entangled in secular affairs. From a cupidity disgraceful to themselves, or from a negligence of their support discreditable to the Church, even Bishops left their Sees, and engaging actively in mercantile pursuits, acquired an ill name as usurers or sharpers.[12] A natural result of all this was that sect feeling and party spirit grew up among the Laity. Church rulers were despised, Church laws set at naught. Mixed marriages were common. Matrons gave themselves to worldly cares and pleasures; and to please their husbands became extravagant in dress and lukewarm in religion. Heathen shows and feasts were frequented with little scruple. Catechumens put off their baptism that they might be the more free to sin. The Church's pensioners, the poor, were grudgingly supported. The pious fervor which good men had really felt, and which hypocrites had found it necessary to feign as a tribute to religion, was beginning to die out; and faith was sinking into a profound and ill-omened slumber.[13]

Other vices.

Avarice.

Worldliness.

Frivolity.

[12] S. Cyprian, *de lapsis*, 6.

[13] Taylor's *Early Christianity* makes a sophistical use of such facts. The Church is charged with vices against which she was contending. On this subject Mr. Poole, in his Life and Times of S. Cyprian, very properly remarks: "What can be more satisfactory proof of the purity of the Christian Church, *as a society*, from any particular vice, than the indig-

Cyprian elected.

Under these circumstances, the election of S. Cyprian to the Episcopate of Carthage, against the vigorous opposition of five leading Presbyters of the city, was a happy instinct on the part of that majority by which he was chosen and almost forced into the office. As his character was well known, it was also a pledge that the evils above mentioned were rather accidents of the times, than things encouraged or tolerated by the spirit of the Church.

His fitness for his work.

He was a man remarkably well fitted for the work that lay before him. Converted to Christianity in the prime of life and in the full maturity of his powers, by one of those sudden revolutions in which the passage from darkness to light is like the dropping of thick scales from the eyes, he had no room for reserves or for lingering regrets. By a mighty Hand he had been led forth in haste from the bondage of corruption.[14] He brought with him into the Ministry all the freshness of first love; giving himself wholly

nant reprobation of that vice by all who hint at it, and its denunciation by several Councils?" To this it may be added, that some of the worst sins sprang then, as now, from that *abuse* of private judgment or private conscience, which the Church may censure but cannot possibly prevent. Almost all the *Encratites* were persons of a singularly independent turn of mind. If the maxim of S. Ignatius, "Do nothing without the Bishop," had been heeded in all cases, we should never have heard of Origen's insane act, or of such follies as those of the *subintroductæ*.

[14] "So entirely was I immersed in the deadly atmosphere of my former life . . . that I despaired of ever freeing myself. etc. But when the filth of my past sins was washed away by the waters of Baptism, the pure and serene light from above infused itself into my whole spirit; when my second birth of the Spirit had formed in me a new man, all at once what had been doubtful before, became certain; what had been shut was opened; into the darkness light shined; that was easy which before was difficult, and that only difficult which before was impossible; and now I knew that it was the earthly and mortal which had held me in the bondage of sin; but that the Holy Spirit of God had animated me with a new and better nature." *Ad Donatum de Grat. Dei.* Ep. i. Pariss.

to it, and disposing of his handsome private property in the same way as he dispensed the revenues of the Church,—namely, as a steward rather than as an owner.[15] He was eminently practical in all his views. With a benevolence which endeared him to the poor, and a remarkable suavity of manner, he had much of the strong clear-headedness, verging on severity, of the old Roman temper,—the masculine good sense of Tertullian,[16] without his brilliant and versatile genius. His saintliness, therefore, was of no artificial or conventional type. It was the consecration of a firm will, manly instincts, magnanimous disposition, and of a mind as politic and sagacious as it was earnest and intrepid, to the special task which the untowardness of the times, and perhaps the negligence of his predecessors, had suffered to accumulate for him.

His character.

And this task was the revival of discipline in the Church. If reform, strictly speaking, had been needed, Cyprian was the man for the work of a reformer. As it was, the shortcomings and excesses of the day were rather the abuse of a good inheritance, than any constitutional or radical disease. There was no lack of wholesome rules. There was no want, if it could only be turned in the right direction, of an earnest and fruitful though undisciplined Christian spirit. To arouse that spirit, to bring it to bear upon the enforcement of the canons, to chasten and direct it, to curb its

His special mission.

[15] Pontius says that he gave all his goods to the Church; but as we learn afterwards that his property was confiscated in the Decian persecution, it seems probable that he kept the administration of it in his own hands. Indeed, as Bishop, he could hardly have done otherwise.

[16] Tertullian was his favorite author. When he said "Da mihi magistrum," it was always known what book he meant. With such a master, Cyprian's rapid proficiency in the knowledge of the Scriptures is not so wonderful as (considering his late conversion) it might at first sight appear.

extravagances without impairing its true strength, was the object, which with singular clearness of perception and tenacity of purpose S. Cyprian kept before him.

Working forces.

In looking around for the means of carrying out this purpose, he found the real working power of the Church practically distributed among three classes. There were the Clergy, headed by the Bishop, but considerably impaired in influence by the prevalence of party spirit; the Laity, represented in the North African Church by the *Seniores populi*,[17] a sort of lay-elders, who acted with the Clergy in all matters of discipline and Church business; and lastly, the Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and the like,—an irregular semi-clerical third power,[18]—the weight of which, however, was generally thrown into the scale of popular opinion. Theoretically, the Bishop was the head of this system. Practically, each class had a voice of undefined potency. *Nothing without the People* was as operative a rule, as *Nothing without the Bishop*.

Balance of power.

There was, in truth, a practical balance of Church powers which custom had established, but which neither custom nor theory had accurately defined. In the Word and the Sacraments the Clergy were supreme. In the choice and maintenance of the Clergy the People ruled. In matters of discipline

[17] Præsident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed testimonio adepti: Tertull. *Apol.* c. 39.

[18] Of this third power in the Church, Albaspineus, quoted and confirmed by Schelstrate, speaks thus: "The ancient Church had nothing rare or precious in her gift, that she gave not to Martyrs; so that, while they lacked the ministerial character, they became lay-Bishops, at least in power, and had even more authority and weight than Presbyters or Bishops." In confirmation of which he quotes Tertullian: *Quid ergo? si Episcopus, si Diaconus, si Vidua, si Virgo, si Doctor, si etiam Martyr lapsus a regulâ fuerit:* ubi pluris facere Martyres, quam Episcopos et Presbyteros, atque aliquid supra Episcopum addere videtur. Schelstrate, *Eccles. African.* ii. 4.

both were consulted; both had a voice; and against the express will of either nothing could assume a legal or binding form.[19]

Cyprian's policy.

Cyprian did not attempt a readjustment of this system. He took it as it was, and conscientiously worked with it.

When it was necessary, therefore, for himself to act, he laid much stress, as was right and natural, upon episcopal prerogative. When he had to work through the popular element, he spake in equally high terms of the dignity and responsibility that lay upon the People. In the same spirit, he magnified true martyrdom, he exalted true virginity; though the Martyrs and Virgins sometimes were but scourges in his side. On the other hand, he disparaged no class; he elevated none at the expense of other classes. The Church to him was a living body composed of many living forces. To enable each force to live and work with freedom,[20] but to bring all at

All classes exalted.

[19] Of the many proofs of this, I select two: S. Cyprian, in his 11th Ep., *fratribus in plebe consistentibus*, speaking of the case of the lapsed: "Cum pace nobis omnibus a Domino prius data ad ecclesiam regredi cœperimus, tunc examinabuntur singula *præsentibus et judicantibus* vobis." See same Ep. and the tract *de Lapsis*, passim. In the *Acta Purgationis Cœciliani* (S. Optati Op. Dupin, p. 169), the following direction is given: Adhibete conclericos et *seniores plebis* ecclesiasticos viros, et inquirant diligenter, quæ sint istæ dissensiones.

[20] Mosheim, in his one-sided and disingenuous remarks on this subject, acknowledges that Cyprian "attributes much importance to the clergy and the people," that "he makes the Church to be *superior* to the Bishop,"—which is a mistranslation of Cyprian's words; but contends that "this man of unquestionable excellence and worth . . . *yields to circumstances* when he admits associates in the government of the Church, but *speaks out the sentiments of his heart* when he extols bishops, etc." That is, Mosheim takes half of Cyprian's words as honest, and rejects the other half as mere diplomacy; a process by which any man may be proved to be any thing that a hostile critic chooses to make of him. In the same way, Mosheim sees in Cyprian nothing but contradictions and confusion of ideas. But the

the same time under that strong control, without which freedom and even life is an impossible chimera, was, so far as he had a theory,—which, being eminently a man of action, it is probable he had not,—the substance of his theory of Ecclesiastical discipline and order.

A few instances of his management of particular cases that came before him, may here be mentioned as illustrations of this point.

Examples. Rogatian, an aged Bishop, consults him about the case of a contumacious Deacon. Cyprian, in answer, points out the canonical power to degrade the offender; but recommends a further trial of patience and forbearance. Geminius Victor, an ecclesiastic, had violated the canon which forbade dying men to make the clergy executors or guardians.[21] Cyprian caused the canon to be enforced. The only punishment provided for in such cases was the *post-mortem* sentence, that "no oblations should be made for his death; no prayer nor sacrifice for his repose." His name, in other words, was stricken from the diptychs. He was to have no part in that solemn commemoration of the departed, which was one of the marked features of the early Eucharistic Service.[22] An actor,

contradiction is merely, that Cyprian's language continually contradicts Mosheim's interpretation of that language. *Historical Commentaries*, vol. ii. § 24.

[21] In such cases, the Clergy were obliged by the civil law to accept the responsibility, and thus became entangled in secular concerns.

[22] The diptychs were properly the roll of all who as "citizens of the Heavenly City" had their names written in "the Book of Life." All believers, after their departure, were probably mentioned once in the Eucharistic Service. Afterwards some were excluded by way of discipline. Martyrs became entitled to a perpetual commemoration. This custom, like many other similar practices, had a wholesome operation for awhile, but degenerated into abuses and superstitions. See Dodwell, *Dissertat. Cyprian.* v.

who after baptism continued to teach though not to practise his art, was commanded to desist. It was better, Cyprian reasoned, that one should live on the Church alms or even starve, than earn a livelihood by a scandalous and perilous profession. In numberless such cases Church rulers had to struggle against the encroachments of the spirit of the world. In this struggle they had the canons on their side, and the general sentiment of the Church. But on the other side there were considerations of temporary expediency, which were already beginning to make the canons practically a dead letter.

Struggle with the world.

With regard to the great scandal of the *subintroductæ*, the Bishop was equally decided. "No one can be secure who exposes himself to danger without need: God will save no servant of His from the devil who puts himself gratuitously in the way of the devil's snares." If any professed virgins found themselves unfitted for that state, they should not hesitate to marry. If they declined this remedy, and persisted in giving scandal, they were to be *capitally* punished. For under the old law, as Cyprian reasoned, such offenders were slain with the carnal sword: now, they should be slain with the spiritual sword,—they should be put to death by being put out of the Church. Accordingly, he approved of the sentence of excommunication passed upon a certain Deacon, who had offended in this way; a decision in which, as usual in such cases,[23] the Presbyters of Carthage were consulted and concurred.

Virgins bound to marry rather than give scandal.

But the cause of discipline, with the chastisement

[23] "A primordio episcopatus mei statui, nihil sine consilio vestro mea privatim sententia gerere. Sicut honor mutuus poscit, in commune tractabimus." *Epistol.* v. Pariss.

Warnings of judgment.

of the disorders so prevalent every where, was becoming too weighty a task for any earthly prelate. As S. Cyprian had felt from the beginning of his episcopate, and as he had seen, indeed, in visions divinely sent, a time of thorough sifting was nigh at hand. These presentiments of coming judgment, with confident predictions based upon them, were a decided feature of what may be called the inner religious history of the early Church.[24] They are not uncommon in all ages of the world. In S. Cyprian's case, such monitions were allowed no little force in determining his conduct. In proportion, therefore, as he felt the forewarning shadow of a divine judgment upon the Church,—"to cauterize her wounds, to purge her humors, to nerve her whole frame,"—he was the more earnest in urging upon all her members the necessity of self-judgment.[25]

Dreams and visions.

Eighth persecution.

When the expected storm came, it raged more widely, more furiously, and with a more decided effort to exterminate the Church, than any similar event before. The reign of some of the preceding Emperors, and especially of Philip, had given the Church a foretaste of the deceitful sunshine of imperial protection. Philip, stained with many crimes, but with religious feeling enough to make him

[24] "Sancto Spiritu suggerente, et Domino *per visiones multas et manifestas admonente*"—was the formula of a Carthaginian Council, A. D. 252. These visions were ridiculed by many. As Cyprian says, (*Epistol. ad Florentium Pupianum,*) "I know that dreams and visions seem frivolous to some; but only to those who would rather believe against the priests than believe with them." On this subject, see Dodwell, *Dissertat. Cyp.* iv.

[25] Origen, about the same time, was predicting persecutions, on the ground that they were *needed*, and from his foreseeing "that the downfall of the state religion" would be considered by many Emperors disastrous to the Empire. See Neander's *Church History,* § i. part ii.

superstitious, had even desired to have a part in the prayers of the Church; and, it is said, had gone through the form of penance required in such cases.[26] He was supplanted by Decius, who, partly from hatred of a system favored by his predecessors, and partly from a desire to revive the memory of the old Roman glory which he attributed to the favor of the gods, proceeded to a determined and systematic persecution. His edicts to that effect were sent forthwith into all the principal cities.

Decius emperor, A. D. 249.

Fabianus, Bishop of Rome, was among the earliest victims. The post he had held was too offensive to the Emperor, and consequently too perilous, for any immediate successor. It remained vacant, therefore, for more than one year.

Fabianus a martyr.

When the imperial edict reached Carthage, a court of inquiry was appointed, consisting of a magistrate and five citizens, and a day was set for Christians to clear themselves by sacrificing to idols. Many availed themselves of the interval thus allowed, and withdrew into the country. Among these was Cyprian himself. Admonished by a dream, and justified by the common interpretation of our Lord's direction for such cases,[27] he hid himself from the tempest and awaited other times. He was proscribed by the magistrates, and his goods confiscated. From his place of retreat, however, he kept a watchful eye upon Church affairs in Carthage, and

Cyprian retires.

[26] Euseb. vi. 36. That an Emperor like Philip, addicted to superstitions of all kinds, and having little of the Roman feeling for the state religion, should in his times of remorse have turned towards the Church, does not seem to me at all improbable. The reality of his faith is, of course, another question.

[27] S. Matt. x. 23. There was the additional reason that *Cyprianum ad leones* had become the cry, and his presence in the city exasperated the heathen.

governed with as much vigor as if he had been there in person.

Many fall away.

Of those who remained, not a few denied Christ in a variety of ways; some promptly,[28] some reluctantly, others under the agony of excruciating tortures. Some offered sacrifice to idols—*sacrificati;* some burned incense before the image of the Emperor—*thurificati;* those who had the means purchased immunity to themselves in the form of a written certificate or discharge,[29] and were called *libellatici.* Few of either of these classes fell permanently from the Faith. Even those who in the hour of trial had shown a disgraceful eagerness to stand fair with the judges, availed themselves of the earliest opportunity to retrace their steps. Their prevarication was caused by timidity and weakness; and the great body of them became afterwards fervid and passionate, but, from the same defects of character which had brought about their fall, exceedingly troublesome penitents.

Three classes of the lapsed.

Many thrown into prison.

On the other hand, it was the policy of the magistrates to break the spirits of the faithful, rather than to arouse them by the spectacle of actual martyrdoms. The prisons, therefore, were crowded with Confessors. Some of these displayed the insolence, self-conceit and spirit of bravado which are natural accompaniments of untutored courage, and by which martyrdom, as we have seen, was so frequently dis-

[28] Cyprian complains (*de lapsis*) that *a very large number* (maximus fratrum numerus) fell away at once.

[29] Some managed more quietly to get their names inserted in the register, as persons who had complied with the edict, without any request of their own to that effect; or sometimes the request was made, and the bribe paid, by friends of the parties without their knowledge. The Church discountenanced all such evasions.

graced. The persecution, in fact, had taken the Church at unawares. Few were prepared to suffer for the Name of Christ; and in the few who were prepared, enthusiasm in some cases became a substitute for faith. The tortures inflicted by the heathen, therefore, were not the only trial of the more genuine Confessors. They had to brace themselves for the final conflict amid the strife of tongues, and sometimes amid scenes of scandalous confusion.[30] The prisons were thronged with sympathizing friends. Priests and Deacons ministered to the inmates. Women kissed their chains. Penitents solicited their powerful intervention. Demagogues endeavored to make tools of them. Flattery and adulation enveloped them in a cloud of impenetrable self-delusion. Their Bishop, who watched them from a distance, and who labored under the peculiar disadvantage of appearing to have avoided a conflict to which he incited others, had to adapt his exhortations to two distinct classes. One class, the most forward and influential, he rebuked and chastised. To do this, as he did, in the face of a busy faction, and against a popular sentiment which regarded the Confessor as nearer to God and consequently more powerful than the Bishop, required faith and courage of no ordinary kind. But there was another and large class which needed encouragement. High spirits and pure faith do not always go together. The vivacity of mind, which some of the martyrs exhibited to a troublesome extent, it was necessary to awaken and foster in others by every allowable expedient. With rebukes, therefore, he mingled the

Scandals.

Two classes of martyrs.

[30] *Epistol.* vi., Pariss.

most eloquent appeals. The more he chastised the insolence of the martyrs, the more he exalted the dignity of their calling.[31] His own character, the meanwhile, he had to leave a prey to the foul tongue of calumny and detraction.

Directions to the clergy.

To the Priests and Deacons who ministered to the Confessors he gave minute directions,[32] urging them to prudence and self-restraint. They were to go to the prisons, for the administration of the Sacrament, one Deacon and one Priest at a time. No one should go oftener than was absolutely needed. All crowding and excitement were to be carefully avoided. Nothing was to be tolerated, in short, which should draw notice needlessly upon themselves, or exasperate the heathen.

Treatment of the lapsed.

In the same prudent spirit he addressed himself to the case of those who had made themselves amenable to the discipline of the Church. A distinction was made between the three classes of those who had fallen.[33] The *libelli pacis* granted by some of the Martyrs, which in popular estimation were equivalent to a formal restoration to the privileges of communion, were to be accounted as things of nought. The Martyrs had no right to bestow such pardons. The lapsed of every sort, therefore, were to be shut off from the Table of the Lord, till they could plead their cause

Libelli pacis.

[31] His first letter to the Confessors is entirely of this character. It is, perhaps, enthusiastic in its language; but a leader encouraging timid soldiers on the field of battle cannot afford to pick words. *Epistol.* lxxx., Pariss.

[32] *Epistol.* iv., Pariss.

[33] Sins after Baptism were atoned in the early Church by the *Exomologesis*—a *public confession*, with tears, fastings, etc., of greater or less duration, according to the nature of the offence. It was probably about the times of Decius, that the distinction of *flentes*, *audientes*, *genuflectentes* and *consistentes* grew up. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book xviii. c. 1.

before the Clergy and Confessors and the whole body of the People. By this course Cyprian made many enemies to himself. But with equal disregard of personal considerations, he showed no favor to that stricter party, not numerous, perhaps, but fanatical and highly influential, who were disposed to treat the lapsed as apostates from the Faith, leaving no door open for reconciliation. The Laity, in such cases, were as a general rule less tolerant than the Clergy.[34] Cyprian in some instances had not only to plead with them for mercy, but "to extort" mercy from them. Indeed, he was not a little censured for his facility in restoring men to communion whose professions of penitence were open to suspicion. But in all such points he was equal to his work. Much as he magnified the Church, and firmly as he believed that to be separate from the Church was to be separate from Christ, he was equally well assured that no peace with the Church would stand which was not sanctioned by the Gospel. It is the Lord alone who pardons; the Lord who is to be appeased. Man can act, in such matters, but as the instrument of the Lord. Any judgment, therefore, or any absolution apart from the Lord's revealed will, is necessarily good for nothing.[35]

Two parties.

The Church and the Gospel.

These counsels and exhortations were not in all instances equally successful. One Lucian a Confessor addressed a letter to "Pope Cyprian," and through him to all Bishops, declaring that those in prison *had given a full pardon to the lapsed*, and requiring him and the Clergy generally to respect their decision; otherwise, it was plainly intimated, they would fall under the dis-

Arrogance of the martyrs.

[34] S. Cypr. *Ep.* liv. 17. Pariss. [35] S. Cyprian. *De Lapsis.*, 16, 17.

pleasure of the holy Martyrs. This seems sufficiently absurd. Its absurdity, however, did not make it the less dangerous to the peace of the Church. It was the beginning of troubles which continued long after the Martyrs themselves had gone peaceably to their rest. For most of these men, both in Africa, and in Rome where their conduct had been equally objectionable, were brought at length to a more Christian frame of mind. Their long and cruel sufferings—many of them being slowly starved to death in prison—proved a means of grace to them. From a letter of the stout-hearted Lucian, written eight days after this punishment had begun, we learn that sixteen had died, and others were quietly awaiting their end. It appears from the same epistle, that while he still felt it his duty to give *peace* to those who applied, the gift was coupled with the condition that the recipients should plead their cause and make confession before the Bishop. A letter from Caldonius, another Confessor, states still more clearly the necessity of compliance with this reasonable condition.[36]

Their edifying end.

Novatus and his party.

But the real root of the mischief was among that party of Presbyters in Carthage, who had so strenuously opposed S. Cyprian's election. Of these the chief leader was one Novatus,[37] a Presbyter in bad odor, who just before the persecution had been accused of shocking crimes, and who consequently looked forward to peace and the restoration of Cy-

[36] S. Cyprian. *Op. Epist.* xvi.–xxi. Pariss.

[37] The moral character of this man is painted by S. Cyprian in the blackest colors; so much so, that many have questioned the truth of the portrait. It is characteristic, however, of times of great religious fervor, that the good are very good, and the bad are very bad. Medium characters do not flourish at such periods. *Epistol.* xlviii., Pariss.

prian with no particular favor. With him were associated the great body of the lapsed; many of whom were persons of wealth and consequence. Felicissimus, a factious layman, whom in some way or other he got to be made Deacon, was his most able coadjutor. By the intrigues of these men, the Carthaginian Church community were thrown into confusion. The prospect of Cyprian's return to the city inspired a general panic. When the Presbyters who remained faithful to their Bishop endeavored in compliance with his instructions to carry out the laws, the result was a rebellion. Felicissimus and his party openly organized, and, proceeding from one wickedness to another, at length put Cyprian and his adherents under a ban of excommunication.

Felicissimus.

Schism in Carthage.

By such acts, however, they lost their hold upon that numerous party of the lapsed, who had acted with them more from dislike of discipline than from any hearty belief in the goodness of their cause. Cyprian promptly availed himself of the blunder they had committed. He declared them excommunicated, not by any act of his, but by their own voluntary secession. It was no longer possible, then, to choose between two parties in the Church. Men must cast in their lot with one or other of two separate communions. Under these circumstances many returned to the bosom of the Church. The rest having procured the ordination of Fortunatus, one of the five Presbyters, as their Bishop, sent Felicissimus over to Rome; where the dominant party, being long ago committed to the cause of an indulgent discipline, and being harassed at that period by the austere faction of Novatianus, might naturally be expected to receive them with some favor. At all

Self-condemned.

Goes to Rome.

Cornelius wavers.

events, Felicissimus was not sparing of threats, as well as protestations. And Cornelius, the Roman Bishop, was not very decided.[38] He was, perhaps, unwilling to drive so influential a body as these African schismatics into the already powerful ranks of the opposition party in Rome. He hesitated for some time. But Cyprian was armed for all emergencies. Sounding one of his vigorous trumpet-blasts[39] into the ears of the wavering Roman Council, he brought them at length to a satisfactory decision. Felicissimus was rejected, and had thenceforward to look for countenance elsewhere.

Novatianism.

Novatus in like manner betook himself to Rome. There he fell in with the more famous Novatianus: a man of learning and orthodoxy, but of questionable morals, who, at the head of a faction consisting mainly of Confessors, had been a rival candidate to Cornelius for the episcopal chair; but failing of the election, had managed to procure consecration in a surreptitious way.[40] This man stood on a higher and stronger platform than the Carthaginian leaders.

Puritan scheme.

His object, as he contended, was *the purity* of the Church. He would keep her free from all contamination. Those who had fallen, therefore, in times of persecution, or those who had been guilty of any

[38] *Epistol.* liv. 2.

[39] Cyp. *Epistol.* liv. Pariss.

[40] It is said, that he invited three Bishops to his house, feasted, flattered, made them drunk, and so procured consecration. In this case, as in those of Felicissimus and Fortunatus, the *numerosity* of the Episcopate had an attendant evil, that ordination could sometimes be had in violation of the canons. The Bishops of the smaller Sees were not always shining lights. The metropolitan system, therefore, and the practice of consecrating Bishops, and sometimes Presbyters, only in Council, was a necessary safeguard. In the case of Fortunatus, the consecration seems to have been performed by Privatus, an excommunicated Bishop. *Epistol.* liv. 11.

capital sin, were to remain suspended from communion till restored by Christ Himself at the Day of final Judgment. With these views Novatus accorded more readily than might have been expected from his previous career. He had doubtless learned by this time, from his experience as a party-leader, that discipline is as necessary to keep men out of the Church, as to keep them in. He readily cöoperated with Novatianus, therefore, in the erection of a new and severe system of ecclesiastical communion. Two leaders.

The Sect was soon abandoned, to the great joy of the faithful both in Rome and Carthage, by most of the Confessors; Cyprian, by his zealous but charitable letters to these misguided men, having done much to dispel their delusion.[41] It gained recruits, however, in other parts of the world. Declaring open war upon Cyprian and Cornelius, and spreading calumnies against them in all directions, the leaders plied briskly between Italy and North Africa, and in the latter country especially made a permanent lodgment. One Maximus seems to have acted as their Bishop in Carthage. But of him, as of Fortunatus, little beyond the name is known. In Rome and Carthage.

Like Montanism, from the lees of which heresy it drew much of its sourness and strength, Novatianism had not a little in common with Catholic Christianity. The Puritan severity, which was its chief point of difference, could plead the sanction of high names in the Church, and was popular with a large party of orthodox believers, especially in Rome. It was one of the points, in fact, in which philosophy and religion were at variance. That *all sins are equal*, and that *a grave* In other places.

[41] The letters of Cyprian, Cornelius and the Confessors are found in Cyprian's works. *Epistol.* xl. et ss. Pariss.

man ought to be immovable,[42] were Stoic maxims which had greater weight with such men as Tatian, Hippolytus and Novatian than the evangelic precepts of mercy and forgiveness. In spite of the taint of schism, therefore, the followers of this Sect were numerous and respectable, both in the East and West; and there is reason to believe that, partly by virtue of rigorous discipline, partly by the close watch which a small society can keep upon its members, and still more from the reformatory influence of new scenes, new associations, and a newly awakened sense of responsibility, they continued for some time an orderly, sedate and highly influential body.[43] Their creed was orthodox, except on the point of absolution. They indulged, however, an intensely bitter feeling against the Church. They regarded her as a synagogue of Jezebels, Balaams and Iscariots; and when they made proselytes from the "apostate" communion, they in all cases caused them to be rebaptized.

Nature of the schism.

Bitter feeling.

Discipline restored, A. D. 251–253.

On the other hand, the secession of so many troublesome men, with the lull of persecution which followed the death of Decius, gave Cyprian and his worthy colleague, Cornelius of Rome, an opportunity to gain ground in the restoration of Church discipline. Some of the lapsed were reconciled fully to the Church. Others were put on penance. Indulgence was provided for particular emergencies.[44] Numerous Councils were held; and as disorders similar to those of

[42] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* lv. 13.—an admirable exposé of the fallacies of this harsh philosophy.

[43] Novatian stands high among orthodox writers. *Acesius*, a Novatian Bishop, was among those summoned by Constantine to the Council of Nice. See Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 10; v. 10. Novatian's *Liber de Trinitate* is to be found in *Tertullian's Works*, *Nic. Rigalt.* 1689.

[44] So long as the discipline of the Church remained a real thing,

Rome and Carthage were more or less prevalent in other portions of the Church, a discipline sufficiently uniform in its character was everywhere matured, systematized, and gradually established.

CHAPTER III.

DECIAN TIMES.

A great crisis.

The Decian persecution, with the innumerable calamities that followed, extending as it did into all parts of the Roman Empire, was a time of no ordinary terror: it was eminently an epoch in Church History, a crisis, a day of judgment; a season of such universal sifting and probation as Christians had not known in any other period of their varied and calamitous experience.

Warnings.

It has been mentioned incidentally in the preceding chapter of this Book, that the approach of persecution had been heralded by mysterious forebodings or presentiments upon the souls of men. In one of the many visions thus occurring,[1] "long before the arri-

indulgences,—such as remission or shortening of the time of public penance,—were indispensable. In later times discipline became a nullity; and *indulgences*, being no longer applicable to their original use, were transferred to such things as absolving men from vows hastily assumed; or by a most monstrous abuse; to the release of souls from purgatorial pains. In the early Church the term meant simply *admission to communion* (of those who seemed truly penitent) *before the term of suspension from communion had canonically expired.* The power of remission was with the Bishop and Presbyters; but in the African Church, and more or less in the Church generally, the people were allowed a voice in the matter.

[1] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* vii. Pariss.

val of the desolating storm," there was a voice from Heaven commanding the people to pray; but when they began to utter their petitions, their voices jangled and their hearts were out of tune, and no true prayer arose because there was no harmony. In another dream, a venerable Householder was seen sitting, with a young man on his right hand and another on his left. The one on the right sat grave and pensive, and not without a shade of sorrowful indignation. The other on the left was triumphant and exultant; and held in his hand a net, which with a wanton and wicked leer he threatened continually to cast over the heads of the bystanders. Dreams of this kind were but echoes of waking thoughts, and belonged to healthy minds like that of S. Cyprian. They sprang from a deep conviction of some judgment needed; they pointed to nothing more than some judgment coming. But when the expected crisis had actually arrived, the terrors of the times naturally hurried the mind forward from particular passing judgments to that great and antitypal judgment which is to be the end of all. The nearness of the Lord's coming was at all times vividly realized by the faith of the early Church. The very posture of their worship, as they stood with head erect, arms outstretched, and eyes eagerly looking forward, was a constant reminder to them of this awful expectation.[2] But in times of such complicated horrors as those under Decius and his successors, "when the very Martyrs scandalized the Church; when even Confession in some cases was but a swelling, irreverential and insolent bravado; when torments in other cases were torments without end, without issue, with-

Dreams.

The coming of the Lord.

Signs in the Church,

[2] See the figures of "praying men and women," in Perret, *Catecombes de Rome*, etc.

out solace—torments which kept the crown at a tantalizing distance, making the heart sick while they excruciated the body, so that if any one escaped and reaped the reward of glory, it was not by termination of the torture, but by mere alacrity in dying;"[3] when, in the civil world, "every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution;" when, in the natural world, "there were inundations, earthquakes, preternatural darkness, with a long and general famine, and a furious plague, depopulating whole towns, and consuming according to a moderate calculation the moiety of the human species:"[4] at such periods it is not wonderful that the common fear or hope, whichever it might be, became occasionally an enthusiastic and perhaps dangerous delusion.

in the state,

in the natural world.

Yet, even in the worst cases, this confident expectation of the end was far less irrational than has sometimes been pretended. A mere fatalist may sneer at such a faith.[5] It may awaken the smiles of those who suppose the world to be governed only by mathematically fixed laws. But the early Christian conceived of no such mechanism of fate. He had faith in a living God. He believed in One who hears and answers prayer. But if the supreme Governor and Controller really answers prayer, it follows that the duration of human life, the vicissi-

Early Christian views justified.

[3] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* vii. Pariss.

[4] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc. vol. i. ch. x.

[5] Gibbon sneers impartially at the common belief of the Church, and at the promise, on which that belief was founded. The promise was uttered, however, not to inform men of the time when judgment should come, but that they might be *always* on the look-out for that time. S. Matt. xxv. 13.

tudes of empire, the existence of the world, the chances and changes of all earthly things, are in the strictest sense of the word *precarious* or contingent: the shadow of final doom may be brought backward or carried forward on the dial-plate of time, with a freedom as absolute, as to a mere fatalist philosophy it is inconceivable and impossible. Jonah was a true prophet, though Nineveh's forty days passed without witnessing its fall.

The Judge always near.

The early Christian, indeed, did not theorize as yet upon this momentous subject. He believed, as the Scriptures taught him, in a Saviour and a Judge always near at hand. He was on the look-out for a Judgment surely coming, ever impending, yet capable of suspension or even of protracted and indefinite delay. The consequence was that with each successive appearance of the portents of that Judgment he lifted up his head; with a mixt feeling, like that of S. Paul when he was in a strait betwixt two wishes,[6] he partly hoped and prayed for it, yet, as taught by the Church in her petitions *pro mora finis*, did his utmost by prayer and penitence to stay or to avert it; and so, when the "signs" seemed to fail, when a lesser crisis passed without manifesting the great and consummating Judgment, he was in no way disappointed, nor was his faith at all shaken. A man, who having never seen the sunshine yet confidently expects it, might reasonably mistake the dawn for the complete and perfect day. One who has never witnessed death, might anticipate its approach in each momentary swoon. On the same principle, the believer of early times was not

Seeming failure of the signs of judgment.

[6] Philipp. i. 23, 24.

irrational in looking upon each successive trial as a fulfilment of Prophecy; he was only mistaken as to the *finality* of that fulfilment. He acted merely on that principle of common sense, by which knowing the end to be certain somewhere, yet not knowing where, we look for it as confidently at the *turn* of a long lane, as at its actual termination.

Numbers viewed as symbols.

To this it may be added, that the early Christian did not base his hope or fear upon arithmetical calculations. He was influenced more by "the signs of the times."[7] As to the numbers of days or months or years in the language of Prophecy, he regarded them as *symbols* of God's time, not rigid definitions. But it is of the nature of symbols—even, it may be said, of mathematical symbols, and therefore much more of spiritual—that they admit within their range an almost infinite variety of particular applications.

Particular martyrs.

But to return from this digression: the persecution under Decius was common to all the Churches. Among its principal Martyrs was Alexander, the venerable Bishop of Jerusalem. Having borne his testimony at the tribunal, he was tortured and thrown into prison, where he peacefully expired. Babylas,[8] Bishop of Antioch, won his crown in like manner. Eudæmon, Bishop of Smyrna, lapsed from the Faith; but Pionius, one of his Presbyters, was crucified and burnt. In Ephesus, Maximus was one of the earliest victims. In all places, many fled into the rural districts, or took refuge in caves and soli-

[7] Diem ultimum et occultum, *nec ulli præter Patri notum*, et tamen *signis atque portentis*, et concussionibus elementorum . . . . prænotatum. Tertul. *de Res. Carnis*, 22. Philastr. *de Hæres.* cvii.

[8] Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i.

The Seven Sleepers.

tary wilds. Among these were seven youths of Ephesus, whose bodies, found many years after in a cavern, gave rise to the celebrated legend of the Seven Sleepers.

Gregory the wonder-worker.

S. Gregory, the renowned Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, surnamed Thaumaturgus for his wonderful works, was admonished by a vision to decline the persecution, and retired with the majority of his flock into a wilderness. He was a disciple of Origen, in whose school at Cæsarea he studied for five years, and for whom he ever afterwards retained the profoundest veneration. The miracles related of him were committed to writing about a century after his decease by Gregory of Nyssa, and seem to have been collected chiefly from the memory of the aged grandmother of the latter.[9] The tradition of them, therefore, had abundance of time to grow. His presence, it is said, dispossessed a heathen shrine of the dæmon that held it; he stayed by his prayers a pestilence that broke out among the people of Neo-Cæsarea; he quelled the overflowing of the river Lycus; when he was searched for in the woods, in which he and his companions were hidden during the persecution, he was miraculously veiled from the eyes of the officers. In consequence of these and similar wonders, he was called among the Gentiles a second Moses. His greatest work, that he found but seventeen Christians in his diocese when appointed to it, and left but seventeen unconverted heathen, rests, it is said, upon his dying testimony. Stories of this kind require to be supported by contemporaneous witnesses. That Gregory, however,

His miracles.

[9] He died about the year 270, or a little after. See Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i., and Greg. Nyss. *in vit. Greg. Thaum.*

was a man of prayer and of extraordinary gifts, and that a peculiar divine blessing rested upon his labors, seems to have been the belief of the whole early Church; a belief the more entitled to credit, that, belonging as he did to the school of an excommunicated teacher,[10] he was hardly the person that would have been selected to make a hero of, unless he had had more than a common claim to such distinction. After the persecution was over, he caused the festivals of the martyrs to be celebrated with increased solemnity; and many heathen thereby were attracted to the Church. His success.

In Alexandria, Dionysius the Great, another of Origen's disciples, was snatched from martyrdom by the loving officiousness of his friends. His record of his escape, and his testimony to the courage and cruel sufferings of the martyrs, have been preserved in the pages of Eusebius.[11] The persecution, it appears, did not begin as elsewhere with the action of the Emperor. It was an outbreak of popular fanaticism excited by a man who pretended to be a prophet, and preceded the imperial edict by about one year. It raged with such fury that Alexandria had the appearance of a city taken by storm. Dionysius of Alexandria.

But in Egypt, as elsewhere, innumerable believers sought safety in retreat. Some fled into the desert; and many of these, among whom the aged Bishop of Cheræmon and his wife are particularly mentioned, were never heard of more. Some were captured by predatory tribes. The greater part perished of Anchorites

[10] His own orthodoxy has been impeached; and is defensible only on the ground that in his controversy with Ælian he spoke, *οὐ δογματικῶς, ἀλλ' ἀγωνιστικῶς*; using words in the heat of disputation which are not to be taken to the letter.

[11] Euseb. *Ecclesiastical History*, vi. 40–42.

God everywhere.

hunger and exposure. The pious feeling that God was everywhere, as near to the believer in solitude as in the assemblies of the faithful; that the lack of sacraments and priestly ministrations would prove no loss, where the living sacrifice of a contrite heart and humble spirit was faithfully presented:[12] the belief, in short, that in every place there could be a true and spiritual worship, led many of these wanderers to persist in their retreat. Thus, while the general tendency of the Church was towards the ideal of social or corporate religion, there sprang up a strong propulsion towards the opposite extreme. The principle of *individualism* was mightily asserted. Paulus, a youth of twenty-three years of age, afterwards known as "prince of the anchorites," found solitude so refreshing that he remained a contented dweller in the wilderness to the venerable age of one hundred and thirteen years. This impulse to hermit-life was the beginning of a great and living movement. Involving maxims remarkably at variance with what have been called the hierarchical tendencies of that day, it is wonderful that Church rulers regarded it with so much favor as they did. It shows a liberality, on their part, and a breadth and facility of charitable construction, for which in modern times they have received hardly sufficient credit.[13]

Solitary and social religion.

Military martyrs.

In Asia Proper, Lycia, Pamphylia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Crete, Cyprus, Gaul, there were numerous victims. The army, also, as was common in persecutions, presented its quota of illustrious witnesses.

[12] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* lxxvi. 4.

[13] The subject of this paragraph is further treated in chap. 6 of this Book, towards the end.

On one occasion, when a Christian of Alexandria stood trembling before the judge and seemed to waver in his confession, the soldiers who stood around indignantly frowned upon him,[14] and then by a sudden impulse ran up to the tribunal and declared themselves believers.

Great plague, A. D. 252.

As already intimated, the persecution, ceasing for a while on the death of Decius, was followed by a great and terrible plague. Such pestilences are common in ancient history, and so far as their horrors are concerned, nothing can be added to the eloquence and pathos of contemporary descriptions. But there is one feature of such visitations, which none of the classic writers seem ever to have witnessed. The Heathen were courageous against flesh and blood. Against the ghostly presence of the pestilence that walketh in darkness they were utterly impotent. No sense of honor, no ties of blood, no obligations of religion could nerve them to their duty. Those smitten by the destroyer were left uncared for while living, and unburied when dead. The claims of humanity were forgotten. All who had any place to flee to consulted their own safety and fled. Those who alone remained were either poverty-stricken wretches that could not get away, or fiends in human shape who battened upon the common misery, and hovered like plague-flies around the couches of the dying and the dead. Such was the spectacle that heathenism presented. Christianity first taught men to struggle manfully and successfully with the invisible foe. While the idolaters were scattering in all directions in irremediable panic, S. Cyprian in

Panic among the Heathen.

[14] Euseb. vi. 41.

Christian courage.

Carthage, S. Dionysius in Alexandria, and other holy men in many other places, were rallying the faithful to a warfare more heroic, and a triumph more truly glorious, than poet or historian had ever as yet recorded.

Plague in Alexandria.

In Alexandria, the heathen, considering the pestilence more terrific than any other terror and more afflictive than any other affliction, an evil beyond all hope,[15] resigned themselves to it in uncontrollable dismay. Such panics added of course to the number of the victims. The Christians, now disciplined by persecution, struggled more courageously and in consequence suffered less. They had learned of late to take pleasure in tribulations. As no spot in Egypt had been a stranger to their sorrows, so none was left unhallowed by tokens of the joy of their festival occasions. To men thus trained to cheerfulness of spirit, the pestilence came, "no less than other events, as a school of discipline and probation." It gave them an opportunity to become, in a sense not realized before, "the off-scourings of all men." Regarding death in such a cause "as little inferior to martyrdom," they paid every possible attention to "the bodies of the saints; they laid them on their bosoms, purged their eyes, closed their mouths, composed their limbs, prepared them decently for burial, and calmly awaited the time when they themselves should receive the same kind offices from others." Similar charities were extended to the heathen. And though the latter were disposed at first to attribute the plague to divine anger against the Christians, and therefore to renew the persecution, yet in time their evil was overcome with good, and the chastened Church once more gained favor with her foes.

Care of the dead.

Evil overcome with good.

[15] Euseb. vii. 22.

In Carthage, Cyprian awakened the same spirit by trumpet-blasts of no uncertain sound. "The Kingdom of God, beloved, is rapidly approaching. Terror is everywhere. Lo! the prison-walls are shaking, the floods are rising, the tempest is descending, the world old and weary is nodding to its fall. But as the world passes away, the reward of life and glory is brought nearer to us. Paradise, once forfeited but now recovered, is opening to our view."[16] By such like exhortations he enlisted the martyr-spirit, now chastened and purified, in a work more charitable and useful, though it was hard to persuade the Africans that it was also more glorious, than martyrdom itself. He enlarged particularly on their duty to the heathen. The persecution had been an excellent school of patience. The pestilence could teach them a lesson of beneficence and mercy. It was an opportunity, in short, to show themselves children of Him who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,[17] and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Cyprian's appeals.

New phase of the martyr spirit.

The plague raged everywhere, and everywhere the Christians pursued the same course. The wars, famines and disorders which preceded or accompanied this calamity appealed in another form to the charity of the faithful. The Numidian Church, impoverished by Barbarian invaders, was unable to redeem its members taken captive. The Carthaginians, though in little better plight, came up generously to their aid; and, having made a collection of about one hundred thousand sestertia,[18] sent it with a list of the names of

Wars and famines.

[16] S. Cyprian. *De Mortalitate.*

[17] *Vit. S. Cypr.* per Pontium Diac. c. 9

[18] About four thousand dollars; considering, however, the greater value of money in those days, it

the donors, that these might be duly remembered in the prayers of the grateful recipients of their bounty. This was done "not as a matter of charity, but rather of religious obligation:" for a member of Christ taken captive was regarded as "God's temple in danger of defilement."[19] In other parts of the Empire there were similar claims similarly met. The terrible Goths, in battling with whom Decius and his army ignominiously perished;[20] the adventurous Franks, whose ravages extended from the Rhine to the south of Spain and the provinces of Mauritania; the Alemanni, who on the death of Decius flouted their victorious banners in the face of the proud mistress of the world; and finally the Persians, who eventually penetrated to Antioch and sacked the cities of Asia Minor: all these were making prisoners on every side; and to redeem her share of the captives was a formidable addition to the burdens of the Church. On the other hand, the light of the Gospel was not lost in the darkness of Barbarian invasion. The Christian captives in many cases proved to be truly "ambassadors in bonds."

Christian charity.

A. D. 251.

Ransom of captives.

Under Gallus, the successor of Decius, the persecution was renewed; and after a respite of three or four years, occasioned by his death, it was taken up again in a more systematic way and with greater determination by the Emperor Valerian.[21] In preparation for these new trials, Cyprian with the concurrence of his Council granted an indulgence to the lapsed, remitting what remained of their term of public penance. In Rome, Carthage and Antioch, Novatianism at this period was formally condemned.

Gallus, A. D. 251–253. Valerian, A. D. 253–259. Ninth persecution.

was equivalent to a much larger sum.

[19] S. Cyprian. *Epistol.* lix. Pariss.

[20] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. x.

[21] See chap. 4 of this Book.

Cornelius and Lucius, martyrs.

Cornelius the Roman Bishop suffered martyrdom under Gallus. About the same time Origen was released from the burden of a troubled and laborious existence; a man whose indefatigable industry during life was rivalled only by the wretched tenacity of hatred, which in the less charitable ages that came after dogged his memory and his name. His sufferings in the Decian times were of the most fearful description. For many days, in the deepest recesses of a prison, his diminutive and spare frame was stretched to the distance of four holes on the rack,[22] while the boon of dying for the Faith was cruelly denied him. He bore up nobly against all the efforts to subdue his spirit; but not long after his release he sank under the injuries he had received in prison. Lucius, the successor of Cornelius, was another martyr of this period. After a month's vacancy of his See, Stephen, a true Roman in policy and in birth, was elected into his place.

Sufferings of Origen.

Stephen, A. D. 253.

CHAPTER IV.

ROME AND THE WEST.

Origin of Roman Church.

The Roman Church, first planted, it is probable, by some of the Pentecostal converts, but watered by the doctrine and blood of S. Peter[1] and S. Paul, had

[22] Euseb. vi. 39; Huettii *Origeniana*, lib. i. cap. iv. Origen speaks of his own body as *corpusculum*, — τὸ σωμάτιον. The fifth hole on the rack was the measurement of a man of ordinary size. Origen's being stretched, therefore, only to the fourth is a proof of his diminutive stature.

[1] According to Lactantius, S. Peter came to Rome during the reign of Nero, twenty-five years

already at the beginning of the second century acquired a fame proportioned to the dignity of the place of its pilgrimage.[2] To S. Ignatius it was venerable as "presiding in the seat of the Romans." A more solid title to his respect was its forwardness in the grace of charity;[3] of which evangelic virtue the fraternal epistle, written in its name by S. Clement to the disorderly Corinthians, was an early and well-known example.

First Bishops.

The order of succession of its first Bishops, Linus, Cletus and Clemens, has been much disputed.[4] It is generally conceded that Clement was one of the three, and died in exile somewhere about the end of the first century.

Eminent position.

Through the second century the Church continued to increase, though chiefly among the Hellenic part of the population.[5] Its position, however, in the great queen city of the world gave it *potiorem principalitatem*,[6]

after the Ascension, or A. D. 58: a much more probable account than the story of his journey thither just after the conversion of Cornelius. See Lactant. *de Mort. Persecut.*, with note of Baluz.

[2] Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ παροικοῦσα Ῥώμην—quæ Romæ *peregrinatur*—was the usual title.

[3] S. Ignat. *Ep. ad Roman.* The phrase, προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης, is translated by some "presiding over the Agape," i. e., as Döllinger renders it, "the covenant of love" —namely, "the whole Church." The context is against any such rendering. It may be here observed, that in the opening of his Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians, S. Ignatius stretches language to the utmost for terms of praise. If, therefore, Rome had possessed any such *supremacy* as modern Rome contends for, Ignatius would not have omitted it, nor would he have lacked suitable language in which to express it. See *Patr. Apostol.* Oxon. 1838.

[4] Pearson. *Op. Posthuma:* Gies. § 34, n. 10. The order of succession here given has the authority of Irenæus apud Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* v. 6. Observe, that while the ancients universally ascribe the foundation of the Episcopate of Rome to S. Peter and S. Paul, Linus is usually spoken of as the first Bishop proper. See Euseb. iv. 1; Barrow on *the Supremacy*, supp. 3, 4, etc.

[5] Milman's *Latin Christianity.*

[6] This and similar expressions are satisfactorily explained in Gieseler, § 51, n. 10, etc. See also two excellent notes on the subject in the Oxford Translation of Tertullian: vol. i. p. 470; also, Forbesii *Instructiones Historico-theologicæ:* op. tom. ii. lib. xv. xvi.

as S. Irenæus expressed it; enabling it to take the lead in all matters in which a leader was required, and making it a centre of traditions from every quarter,—a rallying-point to the Gentile, as Jerusalem for a while had been to the Jewish Christians. It was distinguished for missionary zeal, and for readiness to give assistance to feebler Churches.[7] One fruit of this we have seen in that vigorous scion, the Church of Africa Proconsularis: a Church more intensely Latin, and destined to exert a greater influence upon the intellectual tone of Latin Christianity, than the great mother See itself. Hence, to Africa, Rome was what Corinth was to Achaia, or Ephesus to Asia, *auctoritatas præsto:* the most accessible living witness to apostolic tradition. In the eyes of Tertullian and S. Cyprian, it was a starting-point of the unity of the priesthood:[8] a far-spreading root of Catholic Religion.

Missionary zeal.

Relation to Carthage.

Victor, an African by birth though probably of Roman parentage, was the first who showed a disposition to pervert this honorable influence into an encroachment upon the freedom of other Churches. He

Attempt of Victor, A. D. 196.

[7] Euseb. iv. 23.

[8] In the interpretation of the language of these African fathers, a mistake is sometimes made by inserting the *definite* article when the context and general sense require the *indefinite*. Rome, or Jerusalem, or any other apostolic Church could be called *matrix religionis catholicæ*, etc.; that is, *a* source, *a* root. For the claims of Jerusalem, see Gieseler, § 94, n. 40, 41. In the *Oratio pro fidelibus* in the Apostol. Constitutions, the Bishop of Jerusalem is prayed for *first*, then the Bishops of Rome and Antioch. As to the authority of Rome in the West, De Marca (*de Concord. Sacerdot. et Imper.* vii. 1) abundantly proves the following proposition: "The ancient Church appointed Bishops over the chief cities of every region. The supreme power was given to the Metropolitan in Council with his brother Bishops. Therefore the ecclesiastical decisions of each province were of supreme authority and could not be appealed from." This opinion is combated, but to very little purpose, by Schelstrate (*Eccles. Afric. sub Primat.*, etc.). For the question of the Roman Patriarchate see Palmer *on the Church*, Part vii. ch. vii.; Bingham's *Antiquities*, ix. v. 1.

was rebuked, however, by S. Irenæus, and the paschal question,[9] in which he interfered, remained unsettled till finally disposed of by the general Council of Nicæa.

Resort of heretics.

But Rome was not merely a centre; it was, as Tacitus implies, a sewer of the world; and falsehood and corruption floated thither as readily as truth.

Simon, Marcion and others.

Simon Magus, it is said, obtained his chief triumphs there, and was there defeated by S. Peter. Marcion, Valentinus and other Gnostic leaders found a hearing there. At a somewhat later period, Montanus and the new prophets gained an influence for a while over Victor himself; and thence spread their doctrine, rife with the seeds of schism, through all the Churches of the West. The reaction against Montanism filled the city with another swarm of

Praxeas and others.

heretics. Praxeas, Theodotus, Artemon, the disciples of Noëtus, Sabellius and the obscure Judaizing faction which hatched the famous *Clementina*,[10] had each their day of prosperity in Rome; and, if we are to credit the statements of Hippolytus, the taint of heresy and evil living struck deep into the characters of the Bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus.

Zephyrinus, A. D. 203.

Zephyrinus, it is said,[11] was ignorant of sacred learning—totally illiterate, in fact; and therefore surrendered himself to the guidance of the cunning flatterer Callistus. This latter had been a slave; then a species of banker, doing business largely on the credit of an indulgent master; then a defaulter;

[9] Book ii. ch. 9.

[10] See Gies. § 58; and Book ii. ch. 7 of this History.

[11] I merely abridge the lively narrative of Hippolytus: *Refut. Omn. Hæres.* ix. 12; an account valuable for the insight it gives into the state of parties. As to the *facts* of the case, there is probably some exaggeration. See Bunsen's *Hippolytus;* Chr. Wordsworth's *Church of Rome in the Third Century, with reference to Hippolytus;* and Döllinger, *Hippolytus* u. *Kallistus.*

and finally a volunteer for martyrdom, having put himself in this way of restoring his broken credit by disturbing public worship in a Jewish Synagogue on the Sabbath. For this last offence he was scourged by order of the Prefect of the City, and banished to the Sardinian mines. Afterwards Marcia, the mistress of Commodus, who, as we have seen, was favorable to the Church, procured an edict from the Emperor for the recall of the Christian exiles; and Callistus, though expressly excepted from the benefit of the decree, managed in some way or other to return with the rest. All this happened during the pontificate of Victor. When Zephyrinus succeeded to the episcopal chair, he saw in Callistus a useful coadjutor in the work of "oppressing the Clergy;" put him in charge of the Cemetery, a post of no little honor; and made him his adviser and confidential friend. Under his guidance, the Bishop, it is said, played a double part. While he seemed to lend an ear to the admonitions of Hippolytus and the orthodox side, he secretly favored the followers of the heretic Noëtus. But on this latter point there was no little difference of opinion among the Romans. Hippolytus and his friends not only failed to persuade others that their Bishop was a heretic and a dissembler, but soon found themselves in a hopeless minority, under the nickname of *Ditheists*[12] or believers in *two* Gods.

Kindness of Marcia.

Dissimulation of the Bishop.

Ditheists.

Callistus succeeded Zephyrinus, and Hippolytus was placed in a still more uncomfortable position. Sabellius, indeed, was excommunicated;—a kind of peace-offering, it was thought, to the austere Bishop

Callistus, A. D. 217.

[12] He taught, in other words, maintaining His Personality, made the Divinity of the Son; but, in Him *subordinate* to the Father.

Sabellius condemned.

of Porto. But Callistus soon showed a leaning to some other shade of the Patripassian heresy. To this he added lax views of discipline, with novel and high assumptions of sacerdotal power. There was no sin, he said, that he had not power to remit.

Laxity imputed.

Not even for mortal sins could a Bishop be deposed from his office. Not only might married men, but even the *twice* or *thrice* married, be admitted to holy orders; and those already in orders might marry without sin. When Hippolytus remonstrated against all this, he received only the sharp answer of the

Justified by Callistus.

Apostle, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Or, if that did not suffice him, he was reminded of "the wheat and tares which grow up together until the harvest;" or of "the net that draws in fish both bad and good;" or of "the Ark in which clean and unclean took refuge together;" or, in short, of "many other things which Callistus interpreted in like manner."

His views popular.

The consequence was, according to Hippolytus, that people were quite bewitched with "the sorcerer" Callistus; and, though secret crimes and incredible immoralities[13] were supposed to be encouraged by him, yet "many clung to him from a conviction that affairs were in the main well managed." Having only one side of the story, and that from a witness boiling over with personal and theological resentment, we are not in a position to judge, at the present day, how far they were mistaken in this conclusion.

[13] He is said to have connived at concubinage with slaves, child-murder, and the like, on the part of wealthy Roman ladies: a charge which shows, at least, what sort of scandals could be circulated and believed.

The truth would seem to be, both from the testimony of Hippolytus and from Tertullian's[14] angry invectives, that Rome at that period was a great battle-ground of conflicting principles. Two elements, especially, contended for the mastery there. The Greek spirit, versatile, subtle, keen in doctrinal disputation, and somewhat impracticable, found its meet exponent in Hippolytus and his party. Against this, the Latin spirit, the *genius loci*, more practical, more politic, and in the nicer points of divinity more ready to temporize, was beginning to make head. As this latter temper prevailed, the result was a sort of Fabian policy in the polemics of the day: a slowness of decision, and perhaps of apprehension,[15] with regard to conflicting theories, which gave Rome in the long run a practical advantage. The more impetuous Greeks might chafe at the temporary favor shown to Marcion, that "first-born of the devil" as he was called by S. Polycarp; or to Montanus, Praxeas, Noëtus, and other innovators: but this very chafing enhanced the value of the decision when at length it came, and caused it to be received with more heart-felt satisfaction.

Rome a battle-ground.

Two elements.

Fabian policy.

In questions of discipline, the same practical turn of mind disposed the mass of the Roman Clergy to an indulgent course; and the stricter party, more or less imbued with Montanistic or Encratite notions, fell into the position of a disappointed faction. The vilest sinners, it was complained, might hope for

Discipline lenient.

[14] *De Pudicitia*, 21, 22; which invectives, however, may have been aimed at the Bishops generally, and not (as sometimes thought) at Zephyrinus in particular.

[15] Before Tertullian framed a religious language for the West, it was not easy to express in Latin the nicer points of the Greek theology.

Question of the day.

"the Church's peace." The treatment of backsliders, in fact, was becoming the great question of the day. Many of the Bishops, especially in North Africa,[16] were disposed to shut the door of forgiveness, at least against adulterers and other scandalous offenders. But Zephyrinus and Callistus offered pardon to all. Their facility in this respect, and their readiness to admit to communion, seemed hardly to fall short of that of the Elxaite sect,—a sort of Anabaptists then flourishing in Rome,[17] who offered a new immersion to all who professed repentance, and promised in each immersion a plenary absolution of by-gone sins. Between the captivating laxity of heretics of this kind, and the plausible severity of such men as Hippolytus, it was by no means easy to steer a just middle course.

Extreme positions.

Decian epoch.

The Decian persecution, and the quarrels about discipline that sprang from it, made an epoch, as we have seen, in the history of North Africa: it had an equal influence upon the development and the destinies of the Roman Church.

Rome and Carthage.

In both Churches there was a chronic opposition to the ruling party. In Carthage, this opposition maintained a doctrine of almost indiscriminate indulgence, against the severer views of S. Cyprian. In Rome, it appeared, as already stated, under an opposite guise. But as the Carthaginian Novatus and the Roman Novatianus played into each other's hands, and united on a ground of inexorable severity to the lapsed, so Cyprian and Cornelius stood to-

Cyprian and Cornelius.

[16] So says S. Cyprian, *Epistol.* lv. *ad Antonianum;* his own practice, however, was *after the full term of penance, public confession being made,* to admit all offenders to communion.

[17] See Book II. ch. 7.

gether on that middle ground of rigor tempered by a moderate use of the power of indulgence, which became, after many struggles, the general policy of the Church. This league between the two great leaders of Western Christianity was doubtless beneficial to them both. The bias towards austerity, which Cyprian had inherited from his master Tertullian, and that towards laxity which characterized the clergy of the Roman Church, were moderated to a wise and religious mean. Via media.

The accession of Stephen, a period to which we have been conducted by the thread of African Church History, interrupted this happy concord between the two Churches, and added another to the many painful disputes by which Christendom was already so scandalously divided. Stephen, A. D. 253.

It was the question of the validity of baptism administered by heretics. Cyprian took the ground previously maintained by the Council under Agrippinus, that as the Church alone has authority to baptize, no true baptism could be given out of the Church pale. Stephen commanded that converts from all sects should be received, as the sects received from one another, by penance only, with the imposition of hands.[18] The Name of Christ, he argued, Baptism by heretics.

[18] Cyprian. *Epist.* 73, Pariss. "On this question there were three views in the early Church; (1) that of the early African Church and of Asia Minor, in the time of Firmilian, which rejected *all* baptism out of the Church, schismatical as well as heretical; (2) that of the Greek Church generally, which accepted schismatical but rejected heretical baptism; (3) that first mentioned by Stephen, Bishop of Rome, who accepted all baptism, even of heretics, which had been given in the Name of the Trinity." See a learned note to the *Oxford translation of Tertullian*, vol. i. p. 280. It has been much disputed, however, whether Stephen did not take the position that the Name of Christ, without any mention of the other Persons of the Trinity, was enough for a

was powerful enough to give validity to any baptism in which it was invoked. In addition to this he pleaded the authority of custom. It is probable enough that the custom of many Churches, and perhaps of a majority of them, was such as he alleged. But when he proceeded, in the spirit of his predecessor Victor, to make that custom a universal law, neither North Africa nor the East was prepared to accede to any such pretensions. Supported by Alexandria;[19] by a letter from Firmilianus, the learned Bishop of Cappadocian Cæsarea, written in behalf of many other Eastern prelates; and by the harmonious action of three Councils of Carthage, in the last of which eighty-seven Bishops were present: Cyprian made light of the Roman custom, and set at nought the excommunications of Stephen. Indeed, the latter, on account of his violence, was regarded by many as having cut himself off from the unity of the Church.[20]

Violence of Stephen.

Cyprian's course.

His principle of action.

In all this Cyprian was thoroughly consistent. While an ardent advocate of episcopal authority, and willing to pay a certain deference to the Roman See, he always regarded that authority as limited by the rights of the People on the one side, and by the essential equality of Bishops on the other. In local affairs, a Bishop could do nothing without the concurrence of the local Church; in matters of general concernment, nothing without the consent of his

valid baptism. S. Cyprian's language *seems* to say as much: but, on the other hand, the fact that *he does not argue against* such an extreme position, is almost fatal to the supposition that Stephen really held it.

[19] Dionysius of Alexandria is thought by some to have agreed with Stephen on the abstract question; but considered it a matter in which difference of opinion ought to be allowed. See Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*.

[20] See Epistle of Firmilianus, *Cyprian. Op.*

peers and colleagues.[21] The conduct of Stephen, in endeavoring to make the custom of one Church a law for all, was diametrically opposed to this wholesome rule.

Question when settled.

The baptismal controversy, like that concerning Easter, seems to have remained unsettled till the Council of Nicæa. It made no schism, however, and the violence with which it was conducted speedily abated.

Relations of Bishops.

Two other cases, that occurred during the pontificate of Stephen, served to bring out more distinctly still the mutual relations of the Bishops.

Case of Martianus.

Martianus Bishop of Arles, a flourishing Church in Southern Gaul, having fallen into Novatian errors, Faustinus Bishop of Lyons and sundry others in the same Province wrote repeatedly both to Cyprian and Stephen, soliciting their intervention for the relief of the afflicted Church. Moved by their entreaties, Cyprian writes to Stephen on the subject.[22] "It devolves upon us," says he, "to extend both *counsel and help* in such emergencies. . . . . For this very purpose the Bishops, though one in the bonds of unity and concord, are *a numerous body;* that if one of our Colleagues should play the wolf and begin to scatter the flock, the others may come up to the rescue, like faithful shepherds, and gather the Lord's sheep into the fold. There is more than one haven provided for the storm-tost mariner, . . . more than one inn for the traveller waylaid by thieves. . . . . Where one refuge fails, another, the *nearest at hand*,

Cyprian's letter.

Why more than one Bishop.

Appeal to the nearest.

[21] The term "Brother" or "Colleague," was the ordinary style of Bishops in addressing one another. The term "Papa," "Pope," "Father," was applied equally to all Bishops by their inferiors in grade.

[22] S. Cyprian. *Epistol.* lxvi. Pariss. I quote the substance only of this letter.

should be promptly opened. . . . . It behoves *thee*, therefore, brother well-beloved, to send most ample instructions to our brother Bishops in Gaul, . . . and to the People of Arles, that Martianus be deposed and another chosen in his stead." In thus laying the chief share of the common burden upon Stephen, Cyprian was obviously influenced by the greater nearness of the latter to the scene of action.

Case of Basilides and Martialis.

The second case was somewhat different in character. The Churches of Leon and Astorga in Spain had in due form procured the deposition of their Bishops, Basilides and Martialis, convicted of apostasy in the Decian persecution; and two other Bishops, Felix and Sabinus, had been appointed in their place. But Basilides repaired to Rome and insinuated himself into the good graces of Stephen. The Spaniards, hearing that an effort would be made to bring about his reinstatement, consulted Cyprian and the North African Church on the course to be pursued. The answer is in the name of an African Synod.[23] It commends the conduct of the Spaniards; shows the deposition of the two Bishops to have been in all points righteous and canonical; reflects obliquely upon Stephen; and exhorts the Churches to stand firm against any effort to reverse their decision, from whatever quarter it might come. "By all means let the divine and apostolic custom be observed, which prevails among us and among almost all the provinces of the world. If a prelate is to be appointed, let the neighboring Bishops of the Province come together in presence of the people over whom he is to be ordained, and let the Bishop be

Cyprian consulted.

His answer.

Mode of electing Bishops.

[23] *Epistol.* lxvii.

chosen by the people present,[24] who are thoroughly acquainted with his life and character. This you have done in the ordination of Sabinus our Colleague. By the suffrage of the whole brotherhood and by the judgment of the Bishops assembled the Bishopric was conferred upon him, and hands were laid upon him in place of Basilides. Such an ordination cannot be disannulled. . . . . Be not troubled, therefore, even though *some of our Colleagues* should despise the discipline of the Church, and make common cause with Martialis and Basilides; . . . . knowing that he who thus acts falls under the divine censure expressed in the Psalm, "When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers."

Election not to be annulled.

In this way Cyprian rebuked the arbitrary spirit of Stephen, as Irenæus had rebuked that of his predecessor Victor.

Stephen rebuked.

The persecution that soon broke out under the Emperor Valerian, was aimed especially at the leaders of the Church. According to the imperial edict, Bishops, Priests and Deacons were to be put to death by the sword; Senators and Knights were to lose their dignity and property; Women of condition were to be banished; and Christians in the service of the court were to be sent in chains to labor on the public works.[25] The object was to deprive the Church of Clergy, and to stop the spread of Christianity among the higher classes. Stephen was among the first that suffered; being put to death, it

Valerian's persecution, A. D. 257-261.

Stephen and Sixtus suffer, A.D. 257-258.

[24] Or, *plebe præsente—in presence of the people*—it *may* mean; though the context, it seems to me, favors the translation I have given.

[25] S. Cyprian. *Epistol.* lxxxi. Pariss.

is said, while celebrating the Service in one of the crypts of the catacombs.[26] Sixtus, his successor, obtained the same honor. Thus within a period of about eight years, five Roman Bishops were enrolled among the Martyrs. Cyprian in North Africa, and Dionysius in Egypt, were at first banished; but this being found insufficient, the former of these prelates was summoned again into the presence of the Proconsul, and was sentenced to death. He answered simply and with dignity, "God be thanked." In the carrying out of the sentence there was great publicity, and much of the pomp and show of a state execution.[27]

Cyprian, A. D. 258.

On the restoration of peace, after the disastrous expedition against the Persians in which Valerian was made prisoner,[28] the stream of Church life flowed more tranquilly for awhile, if not more healthily. In Africa, especially, few names of any note present themselves till the close of the century. In Rome, the long and prosperous pontificate of Dionysius was marked by two events of considerable importance.

Dionysius of Rome, A. D. 259-269.

The Clergy of Pentapolis in Egypt addressed a complaint to the Roman Bishop against his famous namesake, their own spiritual head, Dionysius of Alexandria. In the course of a controversy with the Sabellians who had obtained a foothold in that region, he had employed arguments and analogies which seemed to make the Son inferior in substance to the Father. A Council was held at Rome, and explanations were called for.[29] The Alexandrian

Complaint against Dionysius of Alexandria.

[26] Pagi, *Breviarium PP. R. Martyrolog. Roman.*

[27] Pontius, *Vit. Cypr.; Passio Cyprian. S. Cyprian Epistol.* lxxvi–lxxxii.

[28] After being treated with every indignity by the Persian king, Valerian was flayed alive.

[29] Dionysius of Rome was an able theologian; and came nearer, perhaps, than any divine of that

Bishop satisfactorily cleared himself in an Apology of four Books, and the matter was soon dropped.

Such transactions were a necessary fruit of the unity of the Episcopate,[30] a practical answer to the question, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Bishops had not only to watch their several flocks, but to keep an eye on one another. When the conduct, therefore, of any particular prelate was impugned, the first step would be a reference of the case to some distinguished colleague or near neighbor; and if this failed, a Council, as general as possible, would have to be assembled. Nothing could be more natural than such a mode of proceeding. As it was always easy, however, to run to one Bishop, but extremely difficult to bring about a concurrent action of many, it tended on the whole to the aggrandizement of the greater Sees; and especially, of course, to that of the See of Rome.

Bishops a guard upon one another.

A second case, under the same pontificate, foreshadowed another fruitful source of increase to Roman prerogative.

A second case.

On the condemnation of Paul of Samosata by the Council in Antioch,[31] a question arose between the faction that still adhered to him and the party of

age to the exact definitions of the Nicene period. See fragments of his writings in Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* iii. For the expressions that brought Dionysius of Alexandria into trouble, see ch. 6 of this Book. It would seem that the Roman Church, having been compelled to condemn the extremes of Theodotus on the one hand, and of the Patripassians on the other, and having also rejected the more subtle error of subordinationism (or tritheism) as held by Hippolytus, had practically attained to the exact position of the Nicene period in advance of most Churches.

[30] We have already seen instances of such appeals to S. Cyprian. Another similar case will appear in connection with Paul of Samosata. For appeals to Alexandria, see Neale's *Holy E. Church*, Book i. § 5.

[31] See. Chap. v. of this Book.

Domnus his successor, as to the possession of Church property in that important See. It was referred to the Emperor Aurelian. He again committed it for decision to Dionysius and the Italian Bishops. This course, perfectly natural and equitable under all the circumstances, was the initiative of a policy, which, if Rome had continued to be the sole seat of empire, might have anticipated by some centuries the time of a great monarchy in the Church, by making the Roman Bishop the spiritual counterpart of the Emperor. Providentially the empire became divided as soon as it became Christian. Constantinople shared with Rome the imperial favor, and the centralizing drift was in part at least diverted.

Referred to the Italian Bishops, A. D. 272.

Centralizing tendency.

In the mean time, there was little in the Roman Church of the third century, at least, in point of numbers or of external show, to indicate the greatness it was destined ultimately to achieve.[32] After two hundred years of daily growth, the Roman Bishop could boast a clerical staff of forty-six Presbyters, seven Deacons, seven Subdeacons, forty-two Acolyths, and fifty-two Exorcists: and during the whole of the third century the number of Presbyters ordained averaged less than two a year.[33] If

Greatness of the Roman Church.

Number of Christians.

[32] S. Cyprian declares, however, that the Emperor Decius could better brook a competitor in his throne, than a Bishop in his metropolis: a feeling that arose probably from the exaggeration of hatred, rather than from any sense of danger to his power.

[33] See Pagi, *Breviarium PP. R.* who gives the ordinations of each reign in about the proportion mentioned. Calculations made from the vast extent of the Catacombs have led to the supposition of a much larger number of believers. But these calculations involve so many *hypotheses*, and lead to such extravagant results, that I cannot bring myself to allow them much weight. The number of Clergy and the number of Churches in Rome (about forty towards the end of the century) are the most reliable data. See Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*, and Northcote's *Roman Catacombs*. The basis of the calculations from the Cata-

the people, therefore, were to the priests according to any modern ratio, their whole number could hardly have been more than fifty thousand. This was but a small proportion of a population which, at a moderate estimate, must have numbered considerably more than a million. It was found chiefly, moreover, among the lower, or perhaps the intelligent middle, and foreign classes.[34] The Gospel, it is true, had been heard within the walls of the palace; it had invaded the philosophic schools; it had made converts of senatorial rank; and in two or three cases a fitful gleam of imperial favor had awakened expectations not yet to be fulfilled. These, however, were as yet but exceptional cases. Heathenism still presented to the eye an almost unbroken front.

Social position.

To a stranger visiting Rome—gazing with awe upon the magnificence of its palaces, hippodromes, theatres, baths, porticos, and temples; or mingling with the myriads of idolaters of every clime and rite who thronged these gorgeous centres of universal concourse,—the existence of Christianity might have been for a long time unnoticed, or only noticed as a fact of little significance to a philosophic mind.[35] If

Heathen point of view.

combs is given concisely in Rawlinson's *Historical Evidences*, note xxxix. to lecture viii.

[34] *Among the mere refuse of the earth*, a heathen is made to say in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. This writer, probably an African by birth, is among the most graphic and lively of the Apologists. He wrote early in the century. That there must have been a fair proportion of intelligent people among the Christians is proved by the general character of the *writings* of the period; writings which in style and matter are far above the range of that kind of literature that would suit a mere rabble. Such expressions as "refuse of the earth," etc., would be applied by a proud Roman to any foreigner, however intelligent. S. Paul himself was doubtless so regarded by many. See Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, Book ii. ch. ix., and Neander's *Ch. History*.

[35] The silence of eminent heathen writers, on the subject of Christianity, is made much of by

Peculiar habits.

an early riser, indeed, he might have seen a few groups of men and women, before the day dawned, stealing hurriedly to and fro in some obscure suburb. If a curious inquirer, he might have learned from some haughty Roman that these *Antelucani*, "haters

Heathen slanders.

of the light,[36] haters of the gods, addicted to a skulking superstition utterly foreign to Roman habits," were distinguished from other strange sects by the name of Christians. But if he wished to know more of them, he could learn it only from themselves. With no temples, no altars of any note,[37] and as was commonly reported no God, they celebrated their *sacra peregrina* under an impenetrable veil of mystery. Some said they met together at night for Thyestean repasts; that they worshipped an ass's head; that they practised the most abominable obscenities. Others affirmed, on the contrary, that with the exception of their strange, unsocial, and unpatriotic ways, no harm of any sort could be

Sobriety of the Christians.

alleged against them. One thing certain was, that little was seen of them on the sunny side of life; little amid the pride and pomp of the great Roman world.[38] The mistress of the nations sat on a dazzling throne of universal dominion. Christianity seemed but the most sullen and intractable of the many slaves[39] that crouched at her imperial feet.

Gibbon. Such silence, however, was probably an affectation; or, if real, it only shows how blind the wisest men are to things going on around them.

[36] Latebrosa et lucifuga natio, etc., etc. Minucii. Fel. *Octavius*.

[37] Minuc. Fel. *Oct.* That is, with none of sufficient splendor to attract a heathen eye. In the times of the Emperor Severus, edifices of greater pretensions began to be reared in the principal cities. On this subject, see Prof. Blunt's *Lectures on the First Three Centuries*.

[38] Non spectacula visitis, non pompis interestis, etc. Min. Fel. *Octavius*.

[39] Each nation had its own particular god; but Rome, the universal and eternal, had conquered

Such was Christianity as seen from a secular point of view. But the Christians, the meanwhile, lived in a world of their own. While Heathen Rome was still rearing her proud fanes in the upper air, bewitching idolatrous crowds with a glittering mockery of greatness, Christian Rome was delving deep for her foundations in the bowels of the earth.[40] Condemned to seek refuge among the dead, she found in death itself a source of inspiration. While the King of terrors mowed the heathen down like grass,—a little ashes in an urn by the roadside being the fit symbol of their ephemeral existence,—his presence was welcomed among the Christians as adding new recruits to their spiritual muster-roll, swelling the mighty host of invisible defenders, and increasing the volume and the efficacy of that all-prevailing prayer, Thy kingdom come. The catacombs,[41] in fact, were the temples, the altars, it might even be said the literature and theology, of the primitive Roman Church.

Christian point of view.

Catacombs.

Resorted to at first as inviolable places of sepulture, afterwards as convenient hiding-holes from constantly recurring persecution,[42] these regions of the

Places of burial.

all gods, and had a place for all. This claim to a spurious *Catholicity* is finely stated in the *Octavius*.

[40] Impia Roma suis scrutata est molibus astra:
Scrutata est terrae viscera Roma pia.
—*In Subterran. Rom.* Anonymi.

[41] Aringhi *Roma Subterranea*. The magnificent work of Perret brings the subject down to the more recent discoveries: *Catecombes de Rome*, par Louis Perret: Paris, 1855. In this splendid work the plates are very exact, and wonderfully suggestive. Christian Catacombs have been found also in Naples, Syracuse, Malta, etc. See Gieseler, § 70, n. 11. Northcote's *Roman Catacombs* (London, 1857) is one of the latest works on the subject.

[42] "Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life under the Emperor Antoninus, who, when he saw himself much surpassed in conferring benefits, returned hatred

dead became the living heart of a most earnest faith; the very shrine of the hallowed and stirring associations which the Resurrection of the dead, the Communion of saints, and the nearness of the Appearing of the King of Glory, could never fail to inspire. They were *κοιμητήρια—dormitories* of those who slept in Christ; *areæ*—sacred threshing-floors, in which the good grain was separated from the chaff, and garnered up for future seed-times and harvests; *concilia martyrum*—where the living martyrs and the dead could meet in conference, as it were, and take sweet counsel together.[43] Nor was a tragic element wanting, to give force and depth to suggestions of this kind. Sometimes the myrmidons of power, having hunted the faithful from the daylight, would venture down in hot pursuit of them to their subterranean retreats. A Bishop would be torn from the altar[44] and ruthlessly despatched. A knot of worshippers would be slaughtered amid their sacred rites, or walled up to perish of speedy suffocation.

Places of worship.

Tragic element.

for kindness. For when he was bending the knee to offer the sacrifice of prayer to the true God, he was led away to punishment. *O what times!*" Inscription, translated in Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*.

[43] The custom of worshipping in cemeteries, of celebrating the *natalitia* of the martyrs about their tombs, and especially of feasting or worshipping in such places by night, proved also a source of superstitions and abuses. The great care of the Christians in burying their dead began to degenerate before the end of the third century into a fondness for relics. See Gieseler, § 70. Felix, Bishop of Rome after Dionysius, is said in the *Liber pontificalis* to have first introduced the custom of celebrating the Eucharist over the tombs of the martyrs. Night-worship in cemeteries gave occasion to the 34th Canon of the Council of Elvira, which forbids candles to be used in those places, "lest the spirits of the Saints should be disquieted." See Bingham's *Antiquities*, xxiii. iii. 16 and 17; xx. vii. 10; viii. i. 9; etc., etc.

[44] This is said to have been the end of Stephen: *S. Stephan. Acta* apud Surium, August 2; *Martyrolog. Roman.*

All who suffered thus, lived, in the faith of the survivors, on a glorious equality. The infant martyr and the hoary-headed Bishop alike slept in Christ, alike awaited His appearing. The same simple inscription, IN PACE,[45] was a sufficient record of them both. Thus the *inania regna*, the mere phantom realms of Dis as Heathendom regarded them, became to Christian faith the most living and most real of all commonwealths. Persecution gave intensity to this feeling. The catacombs were its expression. Fired with this belief, the Christians closed their eyes to their own apparent inferiority; knowing that at any moment, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, the plant growing underground might rise and come forth victoriously to the light of day.

Earnest faith.

In this spirit and with this faith, the Roman Church acted as if the great Babylon were already given to it in possession. Its seven Deacons, assisted by seven Subdeacons, administered the charities of the Church, and had charge of the poor in the fourteen *Regiones* into which the city was divided. The Presbyters, assisted by the Acolyths, labored in the Word and the Sacraments. The large number of Exorcists sprang from a deep consciousness of a warfare with more than flesh and blood,—a vivid belief in the near presence and malignity of demoniacal possession. Over all the Bishop was supreme; the foremost leader and example in times of peace, the most prominent victim in the day of persecution.[46] There was little attention

Working system of the Church.

[45] Or, VIBAS IN PACE. The earliest inscriptions are the most simple :—"Dormit," "quiescit," "depositus est," and the like; the formula *in pace*, however, almost always being added.

[46] There is no good reason to doubt that in the third century Callistus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Anterus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephen and Sixtus successively exchanged the mitre for the Mar-

Preaching. paid to preaching, in the modern sense of the word. The Church services, which at first were probably in Greek, were, as the Latin element increased,[47] translated into the language understood by the people, and developed into a minute and elaborate system

Public services. of instruction. Beyond this, teaching seems to have taken the familiar, expository, conversational form. *In publicum muta, in angulis garrula*, as the heathen expressed it, the Church addressed herself to individuals rather than to crowds; so that for more than three centuries pulpit eloquence was almost unknown.[48] But the business of the Church seems to have been admi-

Popular element. rably managed. The paternal element had not swallowed up the fraternal. The People took a decided interest in all affairs: and occasionally, through those popular heroes the Martyrs and Confessors, they exerted an undue and dangerous influence. Hence the exuberance of Church life broke out frequently into faction, and once into a formidable schism. But there were plenty of legitimate channels for popular zeal. Some fifteen hundred poor, besides widows and vir-

Charities. gins,[49] were supported by the voluntary contributions of the faithful. So lavish was the bounty thus diffused, that it created among the heathen suspicions of great

Deacon Laurentius. stores of hidden wealth. In the reign of Valerian, Archdeacon Laurentius was summoned and interro-

tyr's crown; five of them within the space of about eight years. See Pagi *Breviar.* PP. R. The testimony of the Catacombs has made this fact more certain.

[47] In the Catacombs Greek inscriptions abound; and sometimes even the Latin inscriptions are graven in Greek characters.

[48] Sozomen (*Eccl. H.* vii. 19) mentions it as a peculiarity of Rome that there was no teaching in the Church. See Milman's *Lat. Christianity.* Minucius Felix explains, that the Christians would have been ready enough to discourse in public, if they had been allowed.

[49] Euseb. vi. 43.

gated on the subject.[50] He promised, if one day were granted, to reveal the Church's treasures. He redeemed his pledge, having taken care in the mean time to sell the church-plate and give the proceeds to the poor, by bringing a great crowd of these living "jewels" into the presence of the astonished and angry judge. For this he was slowly broiled to death on a heated iron grate, and became the most popular of Roman martyrs. But it was not to the poor of Rome merely that the bounty of the Church was extended. Early in the second century Dionysius of Corinth had reason to laud the Christian sympathy of Rome.[51] In the Decian persecution the tide of liberality rolls back in fervid acknowledgments from the brethren of Arabia and Syria.[52] Somewhat later, Dionysius sends a ransom for the Cappadocian Christians carried into captivity by the Gothic invaders of Asia Minor. Thus early Rome deemed it more blessed to give than to receive. Her well-ordered charities, even more than her consistent policy, were laying the foundations of that power over the hearts of men which later Rome afterwards so grievously abused.

Bounties to other Churches.

The temporary outbreak against the Christians towards the end of Aurelian's reign, and the more systematic persecution under the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, commonly called the tenth, added many names to the roll of Martyrs, and raised up some vigorous defenders of Christianity: among others two African rhetoricians, Arnobius[53] and Lactan-

Persecutions, A. D. 274, 303.

Arnobius, Lactantius

[50] Three days before, his Bishop Sixtus (or Xystus) had been borne to execution. Laurentius followed him in tears, saying, "Whither goest thou, father, without thy son?" To which the Bishop answered, "Thou shalt follow me in three days!"

[51] Euseb. iv. 23.

[52] Euseb. vii. 5.

[53] Arnobius, a heathen rhetorician, is said to have been converted

tius. In the latter of these persecutions the rancor of the heathen seems to have exhausted itself. The world was growing sick of its own atrocities. When Constantine entered Rome a victor,[54] his rival Maxentius having perished in battle under the walls of the city, and when the long-hated Cross[55] was publicly set up in triumph, the mighty revolution seems hardly to have excited a murmur among the body of the people. Yet it cannot be supposed that the number of believers had much increased during the times of the persecutors. It was rather that heathenism had become unnerved. Its strength had been quietly sapped by the pervading pressure of the Truth. Accordingly, when the time was fully come, its ramparts crumbled and fell; sinking and disappearing without apparent cause, as the walls of Jericho sank before the persistent faith of the chosen people.

Trophy of the Cross.

Heathenism exhausted.

New troubles.

But the boon of external peace was far from bringing with it a corresponding freedom from internal feuds. The persecution had created a new sore, by exciting a bitter feeling against the *traditores:* persons, that is, who under fear of death had betrayed sacred books or vessels to the imperial satellites. The victory, therefore, was hardly yet achieved, when the elements of faction, which had so often appeared before in Italy and North Africa, came

by a dream. He wrote a work in seven Books on the vanity of idols, and the superstitions of the Gentiles. He also exploded the slanders so industriously circulated against the Christians. Hieronymus *in Addit. ad Chronic. Euseb.* For Lactantius, see note to ch. 9 of this Book.

[54] See ch. 9 of this Book.

[55] The following is the inscription: Hoc salutari signo, vero fortitudinis indicio, civitatem vestram tyrannidis jugo liberavi, et S. P. Q. R. in libertatem vindicans, pristinæ amplitudini splendorique restitui: Euseb. *Life of Constantine,* i. 31.

suddenly to a head once more in the famous schism of the Donatists.

Donatist Schism. A. D. 311.

It was a dispute as to the succession of the See of Carthage.[56] Cæcilianus had been elected against the intrigues of two competitors, Botrus and Celeusius; but, unfortunately, owing to these intrigues, the Numidian Bishops did not assist at the consecration. The disappointed party rallied a formidable opposition. Lucilla, a lady of influence and wealth, with certain of the *seniores populi*, got together a Council of seventy Numidian Bishops, who condemned Cæcilianus on two charges. He had been ordained by a *traditor*, it was said,—namely, by Felix, Bishop of Aptunga; he had forbidden food to be carried to some of the Confessors in prison. It is probable enough that he had opposed the extravagant devotion paid to these popular idols.[57] On these grounds he was condemned by the Council; and Majorinus, a creature of Lucilla, was made Bishop in his stead. The consecrator, in this instance, being a certain Donatus Bishop of Casæ Nigræ in Numidia, the Schism received its name from him, and its followers were called Donatists or *pars Donati*. The name was confirmed to them by the rise of a second Donatus,[58] whose ability and zeal made him afterwards a prominent leader of the sect.

Two charges against Cæcilianus, A. D. 312.

Donatus.

Appeal to Constantine, A. D. 313.

The question was submitted, on their part, to the Emperor Constantine,—the first instance of the kind recorded in Church history; and at his instance

[56] S. Optati *de Schismate Donatist.* Ed. Dupin.

[57] Optatus says, that "Lucilla, just before the persecution, was sharply corrected by Cæcilianus, then Archdeacon, because in receiving the Sacrament she kept *kissing a bone of some Martyr or other*, as if she preferred that to the Sacred Feast." *de Sch. Don.* i. 16.

[58] S. Augustin. *de Hæres.* 69.

three Bishops of Gaul met in Council with Melchiades the Roman prelate and fifteen Italians, to put an end to the dispute. Cæcilianus was acknowledged, and the Donatists were condemned. The latter, being similarly rejected afterwards at Arles[59] and other places,[60] broke off entirely from the communion of the Church. Regarding the Catholics as corrupt, apostate, and defiled by communion with *traditores*, they would admit neither their baptism, ordination, or religious vows, as of any validity whatsoever.

Donatists condemned.

A. D. 314-316.

Nature of the heresy.

The movement was, in fact, one of the many bitter fruits of that root of bitterness, which under the successive forms of Judaic concisionism, philosophic *encrateia*, Phrygian enthusiasm, Novatian rigor, and in short phariseeism in general, had followed pace by pace the progress of the Truth, and had cast a baleful shadow upon all its triumphs. Africa had suffered more from it than any other portion of the Church. But it was rife everywhere. The Council of Eliberis[61] or Elvira in Spain, holden soon after the outbreak of the Dioclesian persecution, is redolent of its spirit. The attempt on the part of a few to bind

Council of Elvira.

[59] At Arles, Bishops were present from Gaul, Italy, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, and N. Africa, to the number, it is said, of 200: S. Augustin. *contra Epistol. Parmeniani*, v. 5; among whom were three British Bishops: Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, Adelfius of Lincoln. See Bingham, ix. vi. 20.

[60] Appealing from the Synod at Arles to the Emperor, they were condemned again at Milan; after which they conducted themselves with greater violence.

[61] In this austere Council, Hosius of Cordova was present, afterwards famous in connection with the Arian controversy. It forbade absolution to the lapsed even at the point of death, prohibited the Clergy, even Subdeacons, from the use of marriage, ordered double fasts for every month except July and August, etc., etc. It was, in fact, more like a Novatian than a Catholic Council. Nineteen Bishops and twenty-six Priests were present.

their own virtues on the consciences of all, is popular with the crowd, and even commends itself to minds of a higher order. It is honorable to the great body of the Clergy of the early Church, that resistance to the encroachments of this spirit was steadfastly maintained by them. They felt a responsibility for the weaker members of the flock, which brought them often into conflict with the hard and narrow notions of influential laymen, especially of the class of confessors. While they honored the martyr spirit, they were forced to put a check upon the extravagances which so frequently flowed from such honor. Hence the charge of starving the Confessors brought against Cæcilianus. Hence the unpopularity of his sober predecessor Mensurius;[62] of whom we learn, that, owing to the number of Martyrs, he excluded from the List the names of those who had put themselves in the way of persecution. Hence, in short, a struggle so close, so deadly, so confused at times, that it is difficult in many cases to distinguish which side of the line the Church occupied; and in which truth itself seemed more or less divided.

Struggle of the weak against the strong.

However this may be, Donatism continued for three centuries to devastate the African Church. Constantine endeavored to conciliate it by lenient measures.

Religious wars.

[62] He saved the sacred Books by a stratagem: carrying them off and hiding them, he put in their place in the Church a collection of heretical writings. When the officers came in quest of them, therefore, he readily surrendered *all that could be found in the Church*. The trick was afterwards revealed to the Proconsul, who summoned Mensurius into his presence. The latter entrusted the sacred treasures to some of the *Seniores*, but, fearing that he might not return home again, took the precaution to make out a list of them, and committed it to the charge of an elderly woman. The *Seniores* proved false to their trust; but the list remained, and the memory of Mensurius was vindicated. S. Optat. *de Schism. Donat.*

But it claimed every thing, and was averse to peace. Among the half-converted savages of the rural districts it became an uncontrollable phrensy, defying the utmost force of the civil power to suppress it, and involving Catholics and schismatics alike in the complicated horrors of civil and religious wars.[63] It was finally extinguished, only through the downfall of African Christianity itself, by the overrunning floods of Vandal and Saracen invasion.

Rome the standard-bearer of orthodoxy.

The long-continued struggle with these uncompromising and bitter heretics strengthened the union that existed between the daughter Church of Carthage and her Roman mother; and placed the latter more decidedly than ever at the head of the cause, not only of Italian but of North African orthodoxy. Indeed, throughout the West, to be in communion with Rome was to hate Novatianism, to abhor the Donatists. In proportion, therefore, to the length and bitterness of the war with these rigid and powerful sects, the ties that bound the provincial Churches to the great metropolitan standard-bearer became day by day more numerous and more strong.

Claim to the chair of S. Peter.

And the Roman Church was the more decidedly committed to this position from the fact that the Donatists, claiming to be exclusively the Body of Christ, established an Episcopal succession of their own in the imperial city. This line of bishops ran on till the times of Pope Siricius, and gave occasion to the orthodox to dwell more than had previously been the case upon the succession from S. Peter, as a test of the Catholic Church,[64]—of the Catholic

[63] For a vivid account of the *Circumcelliones* see Milman's *Hist. of Christianity.*

[64] S. Optat. de *Schism. Donat.* lib. ii. 2. The Donatists, he argues, could count their Bishops

Church, namely, in the city of Rome. The constant repetition of this argument, legitimate enough in the question between the two lines of Bishops in Rome and Carthage, had the effect nevertheless of unduly exalting the position of the great Western See, and in course of time opened the way for encroachments upon the rights of other Churches. In this way the Donatist Schism became a most important element in the History of the Latin Church.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH AND SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH.

The East theological.

While the West was thus absorbed in questions of discipline or of practical religious life, the more speculative East was intent on theology proper; Antioch and Alexandria continuing to be the centres of activity in this direction.

Theophilus, A. D. 181.

Antioch, the head of the Syrian Churches, with more or less of a patriarchal influence over Cilicia, Phœnicia, Comagene, Osrhoëne and Mesopotamia,[1] had shared very largely in that general awakening of thought which distinguished the latter half of the second century. Theophilus, the sixth Bishop in descent from the Apostles, a convert from heathen

back through Macrobius, Encolpius, Bonifacius, to Victor who was sent from Africa to Rome in the time of Constantine: the Roman Bishops could trace back their line to S. Peter and S. Paul. It was obvious, therefore, that the claim which the Donatists made to the See of Peter had no historic foundation.

[1] See Bingham's *Antiquities*, ix. ii. 9.

philosophy, was among the foremost in this respect. He wrote against Marcion, Hermogenes, and other heretics; left an Apology in three books noted for elegance of style; and was among the first to introduce the word *Trias* or *Trinity* into common use among theological writers.[2] At this period discussions with heretics, both oral and in writing, employed much of the time and demanded all the skill of the chief pastors of the Church. Such discussions necessarily led to the study of philosophy and dialectics, and to a more critical and searching examination of the sacred text.

Trias or Trinitas.

Babylas a martyr, A. D. 250.

S. Babylas,[3] the twelfth in the succession, distinguished himself as a bold and prudent leader during the temporary occupancy of Antioch by the Persian king Sapor; and was afterwards a Martyr in the Decian persecution. As he was led to execution, he lifted up his voice in a song of triumph, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." Three youthful disciples suffered with him. As the officer was taking off their heads, the saint cried aloud, "Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath given me."

Fabius.

When the Novatian troubles broke out at Rome, Fabius, the immediate successor of Babylas, took part with the schismatics and summoned a Council, to which he invited also Dionysius of Alexandria. He died, however, before the Council could assemble; and when it finally came together, the cause of Novatian was condemned. Fabius was succeeded by Demetrianus, and Demetrianus by that

Novatian condemned, A. D. 252.

[2] The three Persons of the Trinity he distinguished as *God, the Word, Wisdom.*

[3] Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i. S. Chrysost. lib. de S. Babyl.

arch-innovator in doctrine and in morals, Paul of Samosata.

Paul of Samosata, A. D. 262.

The latter was no sooner seated in the episcopal chair, than he began to give general offence. His pravity has been variously ascribed to a Judaizing leaven still working in the Syrian Church,[4] to intimacy with the new Platonists who were then at the height of their celebrity, or finally to his own ambitious and frivolous disposition. Much stress has been laid upon the last of these. Not content with the profound respect universally paid to the Clergy, he affected much of the state and assumed the airs of a man of the world, a philosopher, and *bel esprit*. He thus identified himself with a refined and intellectual but vainglorious circle, which flourished at that time in the luxurious capital of the East, cherished by the smiles of Zenobia, the renowned and brilliant queen of Palmyra. The famous Longinus was one of their great lights. With Christianity as a religion they had little to do; but for Christianity as a philosophic system, based upon writings remarkable for their sublimity and beauty, they could hardly fail to entertain a certain respect. To win such men, and to make Christian life and doctrine palatable to them, may possibly have been an object with such a man as Paul. But the bulk of believers were too sturdy and too real to feel much sympathy with such liberality. Paul became odious to his brethren in proportion as he commended himself to a more courtly circle.

Court of Zenobia.

Special charges against Paul.

He was accused of pride, arrogance, luxury, and venality. The hymns commonly sung to Christ as

[4] Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century*, chap. i. sect. i.

God, and which had been all along a chief bulwark of the Creed, he declared to be mere novelties of the date of the Roman Bishop Victor,[5] and forbade them to be used in his Church any more. In their place he substituted verses of his own composition, sung with great *éclat* by a trained choir of women. He held, or acted as if he held, the office of *ducenarius*;[6] and delighted to be seen in the forum attended by a crowd, and seemingly absorbed in a multiplicity of business. In religious affairs also he affected much state; preached with vehement gesticulations; and encouraged the bad practice, afterwards shamefully prevalent in the Church, of applauding the eloquence of the preacher, instead of hearkening to his message in respectful silence. He connived at the abuse, on the part of the Clergy, of living on too familiar terms with adopted virgin "sisters;" and set a scandalous example in this respect. To crown all, he took care to lay people under so many obligations, or so to intimidate them by his threats and frowns, that hardly any one could be found to come forward as an accuser or witness against him.

Heresy and evil living.

Such charges, in this and similar cases, may have arisen in part from theological resentment, and from the general prevalence in the Church of austere views. The earnestness with which they were urged, however, is an interesting fact, as showing that corruptness of living could not be dissociated as yet from corruptions in the Faith.

Error of Paul.

The error of Paul, like that of Ebion, Theodotus,

[5] Compare Euseb. v. 28, and vii. 30.

[6] It is hard to say, from the letter of the Bishops (Euseb. vii. 30), whether he held such an office, or only affected the style of it. The office was named from the salary, viz., 200,000 *sestert.*

and Artemon, consisted in a denial of the personal preëxistence of Christ, and, of course, in a denial of the Trinity, except in such sense as could be reconciled with Neo-Platonic views. Jesus he believed to have been a mere man, though miraculously conceived and supernaturally favored. To this man, growing up in sinless perfection, the Divine Word or Reason became united. Jesus thus dwells in the Divine Wisdom, He is clothed with it, He participates in it. That *He is the Divine Wisdom* Paul was unwilling to confess. He believed in Him and adored Him as a sort of deified man.[7]

Humanitarianism.

Alarmed by these novel views, which commended themselves both to the Judaizing and philosophizing circles of the court, and which seem to have been conveyed in the form of captious and skeptical inquiries rather than in clear definitions,[8] the Antiochean clergy acted on the principle of which so many precedents had already been afforded, and applied for relief to the neighboring Bishops. Dionysius of Alexandria, Hymenæus of Jerusalem, Firmilianus the learned prelate of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and other distinguished pastors, were written to and invited to intervene. Dionysius could not come to Antioch; but after a sharp correspondence with Paul[9] wrote to the Church a letter condemnatory

Appeal to the Bishops.

[7] The heresy of Paul is quite fully discussed in Mosheim's *Hist. Commentaries on the First Three Centuries.* See, also, Gieseler, *Eccl. Hist.* § 60, note 12.

[8] His *Ten Queries*, not particularly well answered by Dionysius of Alexandria (if the *Answer to the Ten Queries* be his), embrace most of the difficult passages of the New Testament, in which our Lord is spoken of according to His humanity. See Mansi *Concil., Council of Antioch.*

[9] Without accepting the letters (given in Mansi *Concilia*) as genuine, I cannot but believe there was some such correspondence. The assertion of the Council, that Dionysius wrote without condescending to notice Paul, applies only to the letter laid before the Council.

of him, purposely omitting the customary form of salutation to the Bishop. The other chief pastors assembled once and perhaps twice in Council; but, owing to the evasions of Paul and the moderate counsels of Firmilianus, were satisfied with vague promises of repentance and amendment.

Two Councils.

Third Council of Antioch A. D. 269.

The abuses and false teaching still going on, a third Council of the Church had to be assembled; on his way to which Firmilianus, one of the worthiest and most respected of the prelates of his times, was taken suddenly ill and departed this life in peace. He was a disciple and warm friend of Origen; had taken part in a great Council at Iconium, in which Montanist baptism was rejected by the Bishops of Phrygia, Galatia, Cilicia and Cappadocia; and, as we have seen, was a staunch supporter of Cyprian in his controversy with Stephen. It was owing to his high character rather than to the eminence of his See, that he exerted so great an influence in the matter of Paul. In his absence, Malchion a Presbyter of Antioch, a sophist by education, and head of the Catechetical School, seems to have been the guiding and controlling spirit. Hitherto, Paul had been examined chiefly as to what he held, and by a skilful use of phrases, or by vague professions of belief in the divinity of Christ, had managed to conceal his errors. Malchion questioned him more closely as to what he denied.[10] By this the heresy was uncovered. In an encyclical letter addressed "to Dionysius and Maximus,[11] and to all other

Death of Firmilian.

Malchion.

Paul's error detected.

Letter of the Council.

[10] Such, at least, is the spirit of the questions given in Mansi *Concilia*: e. g. — "non concedis filium unigenitum . . . . . in toto salvatore ὁνσιοῦσθαι," etc.

[11] That is, Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria, the latter having succeeded Dionysius the Great in that See a short time before.

fellow-ministers throughout the world, Bishops and Presbyters and Deacons, and to the whole Catholic Church throughout the world in all places under heaven;" and written in the name of "Helenus, Hymenæus, Theophilus, Theotecnus . . . . and Malchion and Lucius, and others who are Bishops, Presbyters or Deacons, ... together with the Churches of God:" the condemnation of Paul, with the appointment of Domnus in his stead, was formally promulged and commended to the faithful everywhere. "We have communicated this to you"—is their language to the Roman Pontiff—"*that you may write and receive letters from him*" (namely, from Domnus who had been elected in the place of Paul); "but the other (namely Paul) may write to Artemas if he pleases, and those that think with Artemas may have communion with him."[12]

Paul and Domnus.

This transaction, so public, so formal, so deliberate, involving a cause and a person of the highest importance, participated in by the foremost prelates of the times, and unanimously concurred in by all the Churches, is a striking illustration of the Catholic unity of this period. It is obvious that this unity involved no supremacy of any particular See. The Council wrote to the Roman Bishop as to all other prelates and Churches, merely to inform him of what had been done, and to show him where he should extend the right hand of fellowship.

Catholic unity.

No supreme head.

It is an equally striking illustration of the firmness and decision with which the essentials of the Faith were held. So long as the question could be made to turn on a mere word—namely, on the force of the

Oneness in the faith.

[12] Euseb. vii. 30.

term *consubstantial*,[13] Paul was able by his sophistry to blind the eyes of his brethren. But when it came to the point of a simple affirmation or denial of the proper divinity of Christ, there was room for no further evasions. On that subject, at least, the mind of the Church was clear.

Sect of Paul.

After the sentence of the Council the party of Paul still held together, under the protection of Zenobia, and Domnus was unable to get possession of the episcopal abode. But when Zenobia had been conquered by Aurelian, the question was referred, as we have seen, to the Italian Bishops, who adjudged the Church property to the orthodox side. A sect of Paulites, however, or Samosatenians, continued in existence during the rest of the century.

School of Antioch.

The struggle with this heresy had an influence, perhaps good in the main, though not unmixed with evil, upon the theological development of the Antiochean Church. A good effect was the increased interest awakened in the study of the Scriptures.

Dorotheus.

Dorotheus, a Presbyter learned in Greek and Hebrew who flourished till the times of Julian the Apostate,

Eusebius.

was a leader in this direction. So also Eusebius of Alexandria, who had been sent by Dionysius to take

Anatolius.

part in the controversy against Paul, and Anatolius, an Aristotelian and eminent mathematician.

[13] The term was not accepted by the Council, because in the skilful hands of a man like Paul it could easily be made to bear a *Sabellian* interpretation. When it was afterwards adopted in the Council of Nice, it was with an express understanding that the Sabellian gloss was not to be admitted. It shows, however, the weakness of the best-considered words in defining the Faith, that notwithstanding this precaution, there was a tendency among some of the most earnest advocates of the Nicene Creed to fall back into the error of Sabellius or into that of Paul. Marcellus of Ancyra was an eminent example of this.

There were, in short, many learned men,[14] with much study, much discussion, much effort to reconcile religion with what was then considered science,—much earnest and thoughtful, and in some cases, it would seem, skeptical investigation.

Bias towards error.

The Aristotelian method, which is better fitted for the detection of bad reasoning than for the discovery of truth, was much in vogue there. There was also a vicious habit of making sacred themes the subjects of school exercises in declamation or debate. In addition to all this, there was a subtle influence of the Judaizing spirit; the existence of which was indicated by the fact that Quartodecimanism began to revive in Antioch towards the close of the century,[15] though in other quarters it had sensibly declined.

Lucian and his disciples.

Among the teachers who gave celebrity at this period to the School of Antioch, Lucian, surnamed the Martyr, labored with great zeal in the text of holy Scripture, but, falling into errors akin to those of Paul, seems to have merited the bad name of father of the Arian heresy.[16] His fault was atoned, in the eyes of contemporaries, by a glorious martyrdom. It was revived, however, in the memory of posterity, by the marked pravity of his disciples, Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicæa, Leontius of Antioch, Asterius, and other distinguished men and women afterwards notorious in the Arian strife. At a later period, Chrysostom somewhat redeemed the character of this School; but what it

Father of Arianism.

[14] Euseb. vii. 32.

[15] Tillemont, *Mem.* vol. iii. makes the cessation of Quartodecimanism in Asia more absolute than is warranted by his authorities. See Letter of Constantine to the Churches, Socrat. *Hist.* i. 9; and on the subject of this paragraph generally, see Newman's *Arians*, i. 1.

[16] Arius claimed him—Theodoret. *Eccl. Hist.* i. 5; and the Catholics more or less admitted the claim—Theod. i. 4.

gained in him, it lost in the person of the heretic Nestorius.

Martyrdom of Lucian.

The Christians of Antioch seem to have suffered less from persecution than their brethren in other places, and to have enjoyed on the whole a larger freedom. From the fury of Diocletian, however, or rather of Maximin, they did not escape so easily. Among others that suffered, Lucian was carried a prisoner to Nicomedia, where by his fervid exhortations he restored some who had fallen from the Faith, and prepared them for the martyr's crown. He was starved to death in prison. His fellow-prisoners, it is said,[17] being at a loss for an altar on which to celebrate the Lord's Supper, he laid himself out on his back and said to them, This breast shall be your Table, and you standing round shall be my holy Temple. In this posture he continued for fourteen days, till at last with the simple confession, I am a Christian, he departed in the peace of God.

A living altar.

Desperate shifts.

But, as usual in times of trial, there were many weak souls unable to endure the torments or put up with the disgraces to which the tyrants resorted.[18] Besides those who lapsed, some were driven to the alternative of self-destruction. Two virgins of Antioch, well known in the city for their rank and beauty, drowned themselves to escape the hands of the soldiers. Similar acts of desperation occurred everywhere, and are impartially recorded by the early Church. The history of martyrdom is not a record of heroism only, or of unsullied faith; it abounds with most instructive lessons of all possible shades of human frailty and imperfection.

[17] Apud *Surium*, Jan. 7.

[18] Euseb. viii. 12, 13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH.

Origen's disciples.

WHATEVER there was of good in the labors of Origen, remained and stamped itself upon the Church mind of his age. His numerous disciples were able, orthodox and highly influential teachers. That they inherited so much of the solid merit and so little of the extravagance of their master, may be fairly attributed to the firm stand taken against the latter by Demetrius and the Alexandrine Church.[1]

Dionysius A. D. 247.

Dionysius, surnamed the Great, a convert from heathenism and a man of large learning, elected to the Episcopate of Alexandria the second in order after Demetrius, was one of the most eminent of these disciples. Like his master, he had been for some time at the head of the Catechetical School. The habit of examining and proving all things had been the means, under God, of bringing him to the Truth. He persisted in the habit; and that he might be "a wise money-changer,"[2] quick in the detection of spiritual counterfeits, he gave much of his time to the perusal of heretical and philosophic books:—what scruples he had on the subject being specially removed by a vision. He thus qualified himself to take an intelligent part in the questions of the day.

[1] On this chapter see Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*. Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 26, 30, 35, and parts of Book vii.

[2] "Be ye wise money-changers"—a saying attributed to our Lord, or to some one of His Apostles.

His noble conduct.

His noble conduct in the Decian and Valerian persecutions, and in the great plague that followed, has already been alluded to in the third chapter of this Book. It shows his thorough good sense, that, in the latter calamity, he caused those who did their duty, and perished in ministering to the sick, to be enrolled in the rank of Martyrs.

He opposes Novatian.

Like Cyprian, his great contemporary, he kept up the friendliest relations with the Roman Church. In the schism that broke out there, having made himself acquainted with the merits of the case, he took the side of Cornelius; and when Novatian wrote to him, by way of apology, that he had been forced against his will to take the Bishopric, he exposed the hollowness of the pretence by quietly advising him to resign.[3] On the vexed question of the day, the treatment, namely, of those who had fallen from the Faith, the Alexandrine rule was milder than that which commonly prevailed. In the West it was considered a great stretch of charity, that those who had given evidence of repentance *before* being taken with a mortal illness, should be allowed the communion at their death. In Alexandria, the indulgence was granted without reference to the time at which penitence began. Novatian severity, therefore, won little favor there. So widely, however, had the seeds of that error been scattered through the world, and so strong was the leaning towards austere views, that Dionysius found it necessary to warn his people on the subject, both orally and in writing. He wrote, also, against Novatian to the Churches of Armenia and Asia Minor; looked with much concern upon

Lenity to the lapsed.

[3] Euseb. vi. 45.

the effort made by Fabius in Antioch to have the heresy endorsed by a Council of that Church; and it was through his influence mainly that the Council, when convened, decided against the wishes of their recently departed Bishop. A little while later he had the satisfaction of announcing to the Roman prelate[4] that all the Churches of the East, previously divided on the subject, were restored to peace, and that all the chief pastors were in a state of delightful concord. The Bishops united.

The cultivated tone of the Alexandrine Church rendered it comparatively free from the sensuous or enthusiastic heresies. In Arsinoë, however, and the surrounding district, the Millenarians effected a lodgment for a while; their literal interpretation of the Apocalypse having gained an eloquent expositor in the person of one Nepos,[5] a Bishop of good character, who by hymns and discourses and pungent confutation of the Allegorists, as the opposite party were called, stimulated the popular expectation of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. After his death, his followers began to withdraw from communion. Being simple-minded men, they had a vague feeling, perhaps, that the Church was becoming too scholarly and intellectual.[6] Dionysius made a visit to the dis- Chiliasm. Nepos.

[4] Baronius contends that the letter refers to the question of *Rebaptizing;* in proof of which he urges that Antioch was *the only part* of the East disturbed by Novatianism. There is no ground for this assertion. On the contrary, the fact is patent that Dionysius wrote on the subject of Novatianism to many churches. In addition to which it is to be noticed that, in the letter to Dionysius of Rome, *Demetrianus*, the immediate successor of *Fabius*, is particularly mentioned among the harmonized Bishops. See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* vii. 5.

[5] Euseb. vii. 24.

[6] Observe the slightly patronizing but kindly and charitable way in which Dionysius praises "the village presbyters and teachers" who met him in conference. Euseb. vii. 24.

affected region; invited the Clergy and people to a public conference; conciliated them by warm expressions of esteem for their departed Bishop; made many judicious concessions; and finally, after three days of charitable discussion, convinced them of the sin and folly of their course. In the agitation of this subject, the *letter* of the Apocalypse gave him so much trouble that he was disposed to question the authority of the Book. But, with his usual moderation, he refrained from rejecting "what so many of the brethren highly esteemed." Suspecting "a sense in it that lay deeper than words," he was content "to admire it the more" in proportion as his "reason failed to sound the depths of its meaning." He argued, however, that it was written by some other than S. John the Apostle.[7]

Charity victorious.

Baptismal question.

In the Baptismal controversy, Dionysius was more anxious for peace than for victory to either side. His own mind, it would seem, was not quite made up on the subject.[8] He had before him the case of those, who, having left the Church, had afterwards returned; or who, having been initiated in some sect, had received from them a baptism profane and even blasphemous in form; or of those whose doubtful or defective baptism had been covered, as it were, by long communion in the Church. Whether he contemplated distinctly the question of a baptism unobjectionable in form, but defective in respect of an authorized minister, the extracts from his writings

[7] His doubts were based chiefly on differences of style, which he points out with much acuteness in the manner of modern criticism, but in a more reverential spirit. See Euseb. vii. 25.

[8] Neale's positive declaration, that he was opposed to the rebaptizers, is not warranted at all by the passages cited in its favor: *Holy. East. Church*, i. 7. See Euseb. vii. 5, 9.

given by Eusebius are insufficient to determine. However this may be, he had no sympathy with the arbitrary course of the Roman Bishop. "The custom (of rebaptizing)," he urged, "is not now introduced for the first time, nor in the African Church only. It was known long ere this, under Bishops before us, and in populous provinces; approving itself to the Synods holden at Iconium and Synnada, and to many of the brethren. I cannot bear that they should be embroiled by a reversal of their decisions. For it is written, Thou shalt not remove the landmarks of thy neighbors, which thy fathers have set." Pacific views.

This temperate course did much towards allaying the heat of the controversy; the renewal of persecution, under the Emperor Valerian, probably did more. During the prevalence of this storm, the forty-two months of which naturally suggested visions of Antichrist, Dionysius being banished from his See to Cephron in Libya, labored for the spread of the Gospel in the parts thereabout, and wrote two of the Epistles called Paschal Letters. The custom of thus announcing to the Church the beginning of Lent and Easter Day, with religious exhortations suitable to the season, became a prerogative of the See of Alexandria, and was confirmed to it by canon in the great Council of Nicæa. Persecution, A. D. 257. Paschal letters.

In the Sabellian controversy with some of the Clergy of Pentapolis, already referred to in the fourth chapter of this Book, and in the painful proceedings connected with Paul of Samosata, an important step was made towards that distinctness of conception with regard to the great verities of the Creed, which was becoming more and more neces- Sabellian controversy.

sary to the continuance of peace. The former case showed how easily the most orthodox might fall into seeming heresy,[9] for want of guardedness and precision in the use of terms. But Dionysius had the grace to explain his meaning. His contemporaries had the still rarer grace to accept his explanation. Had it proved otherwise, Arianism might have risen upon the Church a half century sooner than it did, and Alexandria, like Antioch, might have numbered an arch-heretic among its Bishops. In later times, when controversy became more bitter and charity more rare, there was less willingness to admit the soundness of Dionysius.[10] But his defence with posterity is his undoubted humility and moderation. With a certain independence of mind and freedom of expression, characteristic of the Alexandrine School, he was aware of the imperfections of human thought and human language. For this reason he was wary of the use of the term *consubstantial*.[11] Its meaning was not yet settled in the Church, and a word of unsettled meaning is always liable to abuse. For the same reason he was ready to examine and reëxamine, to discuss, to explain, to retract if necessary, to understand those who were

Charity and wisdom.

The term "of one Substance."

[9] Intent upon vindicating the personality of the Son, and having in view His human nature only, he said: "The Son of God was made and produced. He is not proper in His nature, but differing in essence from the Father, as the vine from the vine-dresser and the ship from the shipwright; for seeing that He was made, He was not before He was produced." His *meaning* is defended in S. Athanas. de *Sentent. S. Dionys.*; in Bull, *Defens. F. N.*; in Neale's *Holy. East. Church*; and in Burton's *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

[10] S. Basil, *e. g.*, regarded him as *Fons Arii*.

[11] Which he seems to have used, however, for Athanasius says to the Arians (in a passage quoted by Burton in his *Testimonies* etc.), "If the patrons of this heresy think that Dionysius agreed with them, let them also acknowledge the term *consubstantial* which he used in his Defence,

opposed to him in opinion, and, if possible, to put himself in a position to be understood by them.[12] In this respect, the disciples of Origen and the Alexandrine School seem to have been in advance of most of their contemporaries.

Era of the Martyrs, A. D. 284.

Dionysius was succeeded by Maximus, and Maximus by Theonas; from whose patriarchate, that is, from the first year of the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, began the so-called era of the Martyrs: the Alexandrine Church having adopted that epoch, instead of the Incarnation, as the beginning of its years. During all this time, the Catechetical School continued in a flourishing condition under Clement II; under Pierius, who by his many able writings won the title of the second Origen; and under Theognostus, Serapion and Peter. On the death of Theonas, Peter, the last of these, surnamed the Martyr, succeeded to his place. He had the honor of being the first Bishop of Alexandria who sealed his testimony with his blood.

Peter the martyr.

Troubles.

The internal troubles common to all the Churches at this period, and which the Egyptian Church under a succession of able and saintly Bishops had rather pruned and kept down than really eradicated, began now to show themselves in the utmost rankness and profusion.

Meletian schism, A. D. 301.

The See of Lycopolis, for some reason now unknown, had an influence in Egypt second only to that of Alexandria. Meletius, its incumbent at the

and that the Son is of the substance of the Father, and also His eternity."

[12] In the way of good sense, good temper, and real Christian charity and moderation, I doubt whether the early Church affords a better lesson than the conduct of Dionysius as described in Euseb. vii. 24.

end of the third century, was accused of apostasy, and in a Council holden at Alexandria was convicted and deposed. He refused to submit to the sentence. Availing himself, as was common with schismatics, of the strong and general sympathy for austere views, he broke off into a sect; adopted a narrow platform akin to Novatianism; and proceeded to consecrate new Bishops for all the principal Sees. The schism made itself acceptable by some peculiar rites; by religious dances; by promises of a Heaven suited to gross and fanciful conceptions. Among its favorers, for a while, was that restless and subtle spirit, the celebrated Arius. Its rapid spread may be accounted for in part by the persuasive talents of its leaders. It would seem to indicate, however, that in Egypt as in North Africa, and indeed in all parts of the world, the great mass of believers were but partially instructed;[13] and that the seeds of heresy,—crude notions, half-knowledge, one-sided views, and vague and restless emotionalism,—must in the nature of things have been widely disseminated.

Its rapid spread.

Monachism, Therapeutæ, Anchorets, etc.

All this might have led to more extensive revolts, if a vent for the errant enthusiasm so common in those times had not been providentially afforded, in the spontaneous rise and growth of monastic or anchorite establishments in the deserts of the Thebais. In reference to this movement, considering that it arose among the Laity altogether, the course of the Church was eminently tolerant. The Therapeutæ[14] of the first century, "citizens of Heaven upon

[13] Alexandria, in fact, with its high-toned, refined and subtle orthodoxy, and with its essentially Greek spirit, must have been very far in advance of the simple (and perhaps sensuous) faith of the remoter districts.

[14] See Book i., ch. 4. On this subject generally, see Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 11–14.

earth," were probably a communistic Christian sect. Frontonius and seventy companions led the life of recluses, in the middle of the second century. But when the calamitous times of Decius and his successors made common life a burden almost too great for human strength; when the feeling, that things were coming rapidly to an end,[15] was well-nigh universal; men fled from society in all directions, so that the deserts of Egypt and Mount Sinai became populous with anchorets. It was a free and spontaneous movement, the more remarkable that it sprang up at a period when the Church, by her frequent services, by her exact discipline, and by her continuous struggle with ascetic extravagances, seemed committed against all forms of eccentricity, or even, it may be said, of private judgment in religion.

Free movement.

S. Antony, the father of Christian Monachism, was an eminent example of the spontaneousness of this movement.[16] Brought up in the seclusion of a pious home, and so averse to the society of youths of his own age that his parents though rich never sent him to school, he was left an orphan at twenty, without a friend or companion except his sister, and almost without an acquaintance in the world. One day, in Church, not long after the death of his parents, he heard the words of the Lord, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to

S. Antony.

His faith.

[15] S. Cyprian's *Epistol. ad Demetrianum* contains an elaborate argument to that effect.

[16] Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 13; S. Athanas. *Vita S. Anton.* This work is possibly spurious, or more or less interpolated. It is none the less, however, a most instructive sketch of a peculiar religious experience, well worthy of attention on the part of thoughtful Christian men of every age of the world. For an appreciative though brief account of S. Antony, see Hase, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, § 65.

the poor." He obeyed the divine injunction to the letter.[17] He went home, sold his goods, and distributed the proceeds to his neighbors and to the poor, reserving only a small portion for the necessities of his sister. Shortly after, when again in Church, he felt himself particularly addressed by the words, "Take no thought for the morrow." His conscience smote him. He had been taking thought! As soon as he returned home, therefore, he distributed his sister's portion along with the rest of his property; providing for her, however, in a kind of religious house.[18] His subsequent course was in accordance with this beginning. Having heard, that if a man did not work, neither should he eat, he made manual labor a part of his exercises. In the same spirit, he endeavored to comply literally with the precept, "Pray without ceasing." Whatever his mind took up from the letter of Scripture was carried straightway into practice, and so became indelibly stamped upon it. A more complete reaction from the ultra-spiritual and ultra-intellectual tendencies of the doctors of the Alexandrine School cannot easily be imagined.

Reality of character.

It was a life, in fact, almost as much apart from the communion of the Church as from the ordinary ways of the world: a life strictly and entirely between the soul and God. Of the experiences of such a religion no one can be a fit judge, but he who has been in some

A life apart from the world and the Church.

[17] One of the latest examples of this intense *individualism* in religion is afforded in that curious and edifying book, "The Lord's Dealings with George Müller:"—a most remarkable man and singularly endowed with the "gift" of faith, if, as there is no good reason to doubt, his account of himself be true.

[18] His sister appears to have been like-minded with himself. When the two met again at a later period, she was at the head of a flourishing sisterhood.

way a subject of them. It is enough to notice, therefore, without philosophizing upon a state in which outward and inward impressions seem to have been completely blended, that for some fifteen years in his cell, and for twenty years in the closer seclusion of his castle,[19] Antony battled with fleshly, worldly and demoniacal temptations;[20] tamed his strong passions and strong fancy into obedience to a still stronger will; and acquired a fame which obliged him at last to receive disciples, and to show his face again to his innumerable eager admirers. When he issued from his retreat, it was observed with astonishment that he was as hale and youthful in appearance—neither fat nor lean, but with a light in his eye and a ruddy glow on his cheek—as when he originally entered. Antony's battles.

What was more remarkable, he was singularly polished, quiet and self-possessed in his manners. The grace of eloquence was on his lips. To those who gathered around him he spake affectionately in the Egyptian tongue:[21] "Letters, my children, are good for our instruction; but it is an excellent thing to exhort and teach one another. Do you, then, as chil- His power as a preacher.

[19] His first place of refuge was among the tombs, his second in a ruined castle, a haunt of serpents and wild beasts.

[20] The tempter brought before him images of the wealth and worldly pleasures he had given up; assumed the shape of a beautiful woman; and when all this failed, filled his cell with demons who assumed beastly forms, and left him almost dead from physical exhaustion. On one occasion, in the desert, the fiend threw a *discus* at him; which when the saint contemplated in surprise to see such a missile in such a place, it slowly melted into air and disappeared. *Vit. Anton.*

[21] There is reason to suppose, that in most of the provinces of the Empire ordinary teaching was still confined to the Greek and Latin languages. In North Africa, for example, it was a matter of rejoicing, even as late as the times of S. Augustine, that one Presbyter could be found who could speak in the Punic tongue. On this, see Münter. *Primord. Eccl. Afric.* cap. v. In the East, however, the Liturgies were translated into various tongues.

dren, tell your father what things you have learned; and I in turn, as your elder, will give you the fruits of my experience." To his persuasive preaching, miracles, it is said, were sometimes added. "The Lord healed many, in answer to his prayers; and many were delivered from unclean spirits."[22] He consoled the afflicted, he reconciled enemies, he composed differences, by simply urging upon men that "nothing in this world is to be preferred to the love of Christ."

His works.

The Laura.

With such a leader, the cell or the *laura* soon became more congenial to many minds than the social joys of the Church. Among the savage crags and the awful desolation of the mountainous region between the Red Sea and the Nile a refuge was provided for those redundant souls who, with a strong desire to do, but an irresistible propensity to overdo, are apt to be jostled from the walks of common life, and are condemned either to inaction or to eccentric courses of their own. The Christian Church did not originate this movement: it belongs, in fact, to natural religion. She saw in it, however, some elements of good: and when, in the Dioclesian persecution, the strong man of the desert came down to Alexandria to see how it fared with his brethren,—"prepared," as he expressed it, "either to combat himself or to behold the combatants;" or when, soberly and prudently, with the gentleness of a woman,[23] he ministered to the wants of the

Antony in Alexandria.

[22] Whatever may be thought of the miracles of S. Antony, his modesty and humility in connection with them are worthy of admiration. Thus Marcianus, a military prefect, came to his door, and was very importunate in his request that he would cast out a devil which possessed his daughter. The saint at length showed himself and said: "Why criest thou to me. I also am but a man. If thou believest in CHRIST whom I serve, then pray to God, and it shall be done." Then the man believed, and called upon Christ, and his daughter was healed. *Vit. Anton.*

[23] There was a peculiar amiability about him. In the desert,

Confessors in prison,—the very heathen respecting the sanctity of his character: then she began to glory in her Anchorets almost as much as in her noble army of Martyrs. The system, in fact, was but another form of confessorship. As one field closed by the cessation of persecution, a new field opened to that spirit of earnest emulation and eccentric heroism,[24] which might be employed for good or might be perverted to evil; but which, for good or evil, was one of the strong elements of the practical religion of the times.

New form of confessorship.

The Dioclesian persecution raged terribly in Alexandria, and in all parts of Egypt. The martyrs were more numerous and more eminent than at any period before. It rests on the testimony of eye-witnesses, that the sufferers were not only scourged and put to death; but, in cases without number, were stretched on the rack, suspended by the hands, torn with pincers, seared with molten lead, roasted over a slow fire, suffocated with smoke, deprived of their eyes or other members, and, in short, treated with every inhumanity

The great persecution.

he not only raised food for himself, but cultivated little patches of ground for the benefit of chance travellers. The wild beasts at first gave him trouble, by trampling on his corn. But one day he laid his hand gently on one of them, and said to the rest: "Why trouble a man who does you no harm? Depart, in the name of the Lord." Afterwards they gave him no further trouble. I cannot but think that it was this sweetness of temper, united to a dauntless courage and immovable self-possession, that secured him immunity in Alexandria when less eminent believers were in constant peril.

[24] The spirit of emulation—the desire to do something that no one had done before—breathes through the annals of the eremites. Thus the *Vita S. Antonii* begins: "A glorious contest have ye undertaken, in endeavoring to equal or even to surpass the life of the Egyptian monks." In the same way, S. Antony learned, late in life, that there was one man on earth his superior in asceticism: namely, Paul, who had lived ninety years out of sight or hearing of man, with only a palm-tree for shelter and meat and clothing. S. Antony visited him in time to be a witness of his death.

that the most fiendish cruelty could suggest.[25] Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, was among the last that suffered. When he was thrown into prison, his people collected in such numbers about his place of confinement that the soldiers who had been sent to put him to death were unable to enter by the door: but taking advantage of a dark and stormy night, they made a hole through one of the walls of his cell. The martyr understood their intention and aided them in it. Making the sign of the cross and saying, "Better that we should die than expose the people to danger," he stretched forth his head to the executioner, and it was stricken off. He is named by the Greeks "the Seal and end of the Martyrs."

Martyrdom of Peter, A. D. 311.

Arius and Alexander, A. D. 312.

It is said that before his death, in consequence of a vision he had seen, he solemnly warned the Church against Arius, who lay at that time under sentence of excommunication. His successor Achillas, however, paid no attention to the warning. Arius was not only absolved and admitted to the Priesthood, but, being set over the Church of Baucalis—one of the oldest and wealthiest in the city,—he became, on the death of Achillas, a prominent candidate for the vacant episcopal chair. But in this he failed. Alexander was elected by unanimous consent. This disappointment, it was believed, cast a decided gloom upon the soul of Arius; and is regarded as the beginning of that great cloud, fraught with ages of mischief and dissension, which, at the close of this period of history and at the opening of the next, we find overshadowing the most flourishing portions of the Church.

A new storm gathering.

[25] Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* viii.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCHES IN GENERAL.

The great Epic.

In that wonderful Epic which was for so many ages the Bible of the old classic world, and which next to the true Bible has entered most into the mind of the European nations since, the Hero of the poem appears only at the beginning of the Action and at its close: his absence the meanwhile giving occasion for the development of the "excellence" first of one warrior,[1] then of another, and so on through all the changeful issues of the fight, till the "gift," not of each leader only,[2] but of each nation, tribe or other division of the host has been duly exercised and brought out to view.

A type of Church history.

This is a summary of what may be called the divine plan of History in general; more especially of the History of the Church of God. The WORD is the Alpha and Omega of it, the author and finisher, the beginning and the end. It is only, therefore, at the opening and the close that this divine Word is made fully apparent. In the long interval between, man is

[1] The ἀριστεία of Diomede, of Agamemnon, etc. *Iliados* v., xi., etc.

[2] The fact that "every good gift" cometh down from above is recognized by Homer in the persons of the most frivolous of his heroes and of the wisest and most earnest. Paris reminds Hector of it (*Il.* iii. 66); Ulysses commends it to the rude minds of the Phæacian youths. (*Odyss.* viii. 167.) It flows more sweetly and religiously from that most faultless of the creatures of human genius, the daughter of Alcinous. (*Odyss.* vi. 189.) Herodotus also is a faithful witness to this truth.

the visible, and to the mere eye of flesh the principal, worker; the all-sustaining Arm being manifested occasionally, however, and to a greater or less degree, at those eventful *epochs*,[3] properly so called, which bring certain periods to a close, and so typify or prefigure the full appearing of God's Kingdom at the end of time.

Lesson of the first three centuries.

The story of the First Three Centuries is but a minute portion of that wondrous plan; the mere infancy of a manhood, the real growth of which even yet (it may be) has hardly more than begun. But being beyond doubt a living portion, and in some respects singularly complete in itself, it exhibits more clearly than any other period the essential features of the whole, and may be rightly taken, therefore, as the best representative of it. Its first age, accordingly, is eminently that of the Divine Arm laid bare to view. In His incarnate Presence, or in mighty demonstrations of spiritual power, the Hero of the *epos* Himself appears. Then follows a long and weary season of seeming absence. The great Sower has sown the seed, and gone His way to His rest;[4] the seed being left, as it were, to the natural fertility of the soil. Men, therefore, become the prominent actors. First singly, then in groups or schools, then in local, provincial or national Churches, they appear successively before us; and in defeat[5] rather than in victory each does his utmost to sustain the cause. Finally, when patience has had her perfect work; when the *aristeia* of each lower agent has been dis-

The Pentecostal age.

The age of Schools.

The age of Churches.

[3] Epoch—a holding up, a pause, a stop. It is remarkable, that in the great field of physical history which has been opened by modern science, *epochs* are as manifest as in the lives of races or of nations. See Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks*.

[4] S. Mark, iv. 27.

[5] 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

played; when the weakness and incompetency of the arm of flesh has been made sufficiently apparent: then, a marked Providential deliverance closes the first act of the drama; the Roman world submits to the standard of the Cross; and the first earnest is afforded of that crowning victory, the day and hour of which neither man nor angel can determine.

The Roman world.

But the Roman world, which was the first battle-field and the scene of the first great victory of the Gospel, was merely a narrow belt of highly civilized and intellectual nations around the shores of the Mediterranean; and in the account already given of Carthage, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, with incidental mention of other Churches, the story of the first three centuries is well-nigh told. So far as the working out of any great principle is concerned—whether of doctrine, discipline, or worship—little remains to be added. A brief notice of the other Churches, however, following the order in which they present themselves on the map of the world, may help the reader to form a more distinct conception of the state of Christianity at this critical period of its history, and to appreciate more fully the nature and extent of the progress that had been so far made.

The belt of the Mediterranean.

North Africa.

In the provinces of North Africa already spoken of in this Book, extending from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to Cyrene on the East, and bounded on the South by Mount Atlas and the Libyan desert, there were by the end of the third century at least one hundred episcopal sees, and possibly a much larger number.[6] The Southern borders of this nar-

[6] In the beginning of the fourth century the Donatists could bring

row strip were exposed to the inroads of barbarous tribes, among which the Gospel had made little or no progress. It may be doubted, indeed, whether in the provinces themselves it had extended much further than it could be carried through the medium of the Latin tongue. Next in order towards the East, along the same belt, come Libya, Pentapolis and Egypt, covering an area about three times as large as England, dependent more or less on the See of Alexandria, and governed by about one hundred Bishops. In Nubia and Abyssinia there were probably some imprisoned rays of Pentecostal light, but of the state of Christianity in those countries we have no certain knowledge. Arabia, exclusive of Arabia Petræa, numbered twenty-one dioceses, composed for the most part of clusters of village Churches, of which the chief See was Bostra, sometimes known under the name of Philadelphia. The missionary journey that Pantænus is said to have made to India, in which he discovered some traces of the labors of S. Bartholomew and S. Thomas, is supposed by many to have been merely to some part of Arabia. On this point, however, there is room for little more than a baseless conjecture. Passing towards the North along the Asiatic section of the same belt of the Mediterranean, we come next to Palestine, including Arabia Petræa, in which we

Egypt.

Nubia. Abyssinia.

Arabia.

India.

Palestine.

together a Council of 270 Bishops. In S. Augustine's time there were 466 Bishoprics. The multiplication of dioceses was greater in Africa than elsewhere, the Donatists having started it, and the Catholics following their example in self-defence. In the rest of this chapter, my object is merely to give a general view; and, the *data* being imperfect, I have to rely for the most part on conjecture. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book ix.; and Maurice's *Vindication of the Primitive Church*, etc. London, 1682.

find some forty-eight dioceses, dependent more or less on Jerusalem or Cæsarea.

Jerusalem.

The former of these Churches, which we left under the new name of Ælia at the beginning of its Gentile succession in Hadrian's time, continued to cherish with some pride the name, and it is said the chair, of S. James; and was regarded with no little reverence as the oldest of the Mother Churches. In the history of her Bishops there seems to be more of the conventional type of saintliness, and perhaps somewhat more of the marvellous, than appears elsewhere. Narcissus, the thirtieth in order from S. James, had not a few miracles attributed to him. On one occasion, at a vigil just before the Easter Feast, the lights were going out in the Church, but were restored—miraculously, it was thought—by the Bishop's ordering water to be brought and poured into the lamps. This holy man was a rigid enforcer of discipline. Offended at his strictness, three wretches were found to trump up an accusation against him, which they even went so far as to confirm by an oath. One of them prayed that he might perish by fire, another that his body might be eaten by a plague, a third that he might lose his sight, if their witness against the Bishop should be found untrue. Narcissus shrank from the blight of a calumny thus fearfully attested, and secretly retired to a hermit life. But the innocence of his character was fully vindicated. The accusers perished according to the tenor of their oaths; and at length, after three successors in the episcopate had in the mean time done their work and departed to their rest, Narcissus appeared again as one risen from the dead, and at the request of the holy brethren resumed the chair he

Chair of S. James.

Narcissus, A. D. 195.

His accusers.

Alexander, A. D. 212.

had abandoned. Alexander, a disciple of Origen, and Bishop at that time of a Church in Cappadocia, happening to come to Jerusalem in fulfilment of a vow, was seized upon by the faithful of the holy City and installed as coadjutor to their aged chief; the irregularity being covered, it was thought, by a divine communication through a dream or vision.[7]

A patron of learning.

This latter prelate proved to be a patron of learning and of learned men; and added a handsome Library to the attractions of the Church in Ælia. It was he who, in conjunction with Theoctistus of Cæsarea, upheld the cause of Origen against his Bishop Demetrius, and gave currency to the learning and perhaps to some of the vagaries of that gifted teacher. He died a martyr, as we have seen, in the Decian persecution. Hymenæus, the second after him in order of succession, took an active part in the proceedings against Paul of Samosata, and lived long enough to be personally known to Eusebius the Church historian.

Hymenæus.

Martyrs of Palestine.

The Churches in Palestine were distinguished by many noble "wrestlers" in the tenth persecution, whose merits have been more particularly recorded than is common with the martyrs of the early Church.[8] It is a hideous story of imprisonments, tortures and monstrous inhumanities, relieved only by the vivid faith and indomitable spirit of the sufferers. Wonderful was the steadfastness of those whose privilege it was to die for the Faith: more wonderful still the patient and meek endurance of the much larger number, who were condemned to the mines, or to a crippled life, dependent on the

Lively faith of the mass of believers.

[7] Euseb. vi. 9–11.

[8] Euseb. *Martyrs of Palestine.*

charity of others in little better plight than themselves. But the greatest marvel of all was the buoyancy of hope that sustained the large and timid crowd who were too insignificant, or perhaps too cautious, to share in the sufferings and the glory of the brave Confessors. The Churches were closed. Public services were suspended. The cemeteries and all other kinds of Church property had been confiscated. The Clergy were in prison, or in the mines, or in obscure hiding-places. Heathen worship was revived with the utmost splendor; and wherever one might look, the Church, as an organized body, seemed to be almost extinct. Yet when a lull of a few days occurred in the times of Maximin, and a deceitful peace tempted the Christians once more to show themselves, the effect, we are told, was like a flash of lightning.[9] All places of worship were suddenly crowded; the cemeteries were thronged; hymns and songs of joy and mutual congratulations everywhere resounded. It was like a tree breaking out into blossom in the midst of a winter's frost. So striking was the spectacle of single-hearted gladness thus suddenly exhibited, that many of the heathen beholding it, were led by a sympathetic feeling to attach themselves to the Church.

Its effect upon the heathen.

Cæsarea, not inferior to Jerusalem in influence or actual power, is known at this period chiefly for the countenance given to Origen by its Bishop Theoctistus, and for the part taken by Theotecnus in the case of the heretic Paul. It was also the scene of some of the most fearful of the atrocities of the

Cæsarea.

[9] Euseb. ix. 1.

great persecution. Further on towards the North comes Tyre, memorable for a noble Church edifice, destroyed and splendidly restored during the same trying times. There Origen laid down his weary life; there also, under the leading of Methodius, began an endless series of assaults upon the memory of the Alexandrine teacher.

Tyre.

Syria.

The Syrian Church, which has repeatedly been before us in connection with Antioch, extended from the isle of Cyprus on the West to Mesopotamia on the East; and in its different provinces eighty Bishops, more or less, might have been counted at this period.

The further East.

In the vast Eastern world that lay beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, the signs of an early knowledge of the Gospel are but few and faint. Edessa had been from Apostolic times a centre of light to Mesopotamia. Armenia was converted at the end of the third century by Gregory the Illuminator. Persia likewise received some rays of the Truth. There, however, the progress of the Gospel was not only stayed for awhile, but was violently rolled back in the organized system and proselyting zeal of the great heresy of the Manichæans.

Asia Minor.

Next to Palestine, Asia Minor had been the elect field of the early growth of Religion, most of the writings of the New Testament being addressed to believers in that region; and it was in one of its provinces, Asia Proconsularis or Asia Proper, that Catholic Christianity first assumed its type form in the mystical seven Churches of the Revelation of S. John. It was also the cradle of the most formidable heresies of the early Church.[10] Among the

Asia Proper.

[10] Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century.*

fanatical population of Phrygia, Montanus was born, and after him Novatianus the great Schismatic. In other parts, Judaic and Gnostic elements had been blended into their most seductive and most pernicious forms; and the contest with these various errors had been further complicated by the unhappy strife about the Pascha, and by the rationalistic views of such men as Praxeas and Noëtus. From these fiery trials the Churches of Asia Minor came out safe in the main, but not without suffering loss in more ways than one. In fact, while the Churches in this region continued to be among the most populous and flourishing in Christendom, yet their long and weary struggle seems in some measure to have benumbed their strength; so that, after the first glorious era of S. John and his immediate disciples, their history is comparatively obscure and uninteresting.

Phrygia.

Saved so as by fire.

The whole extent of country was about six hundred miles in length by three hundred in breadth, embracing according to the earliest notices some three hundred and eighty-eight dioceses, the greater part of which, probably, were established during the first three centuries. Of its various provinces the majority are alluded to in the New Testament, and profited by the labors of the chief Apostles. Bithynia seems to merit particular notice as being the scene of the persecution mentioned in Pliny's famous letter to Trajan, and as being the starting point of the last great war against Christianity: Nicomedia, its chief city, a place on the Propontis about fifty miles east of the present site of Constantinople, having been chosen by Diocletian as the imperial abode.

Extent of the country.

Bithynia.

Nicomedia

During the Decian times, Pontus and other parts

Gothic invasion.

of Asia Minor were thrown into a state of confusion hardly short of anarchy, by the terrible inroads of the Goths. Among the Christians, many were forced by these barbarians to deny the Faith. On the other hand, the Gospel asserted its power; and the beginnings were seen of that wonderful ordering of Providence, by which nations to whom the light had not been carried were brought by a secret guidance within the sphere of the light,[11] and the way was opened for a civilization which (perhaps) the effete Roman world was no longer capable of receiving.

Macedonia, Achaia.

Passing from Asia Minor into the European provinces, there is little of any special interest in the annals of the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia; and still less in what was becoming slowly a part of Christendom, the region that extends from Constantinople to Sardica, and from the Ægean Sea to the Danube. Corinth, which kept its place at the head of the Churches of Achaia, was adorned in the second century by the pastoral labors of Dionysius, one of the wisest of Church teachers, whose writings are admirably but too briefly summed up in the History of Eusebius.[12] He opposed the early inroads of the encratite spirit. Writing to Pinytus the Bishop of the Church of the Gnossians, he exhorted him *not to impose upon the brethren a burden in regard to purity too great for their strength*, but to have consideration for human infirmity. To which Pinytus answered, with the usual self-complacency of his austere school, that men should be fed with strong meat, milk being fit only for babes. The substitu-

Dionysius of Corinth, A. D. 176.

He opposes the encratite school.

[11] Sozomen, ii. 6.

[12] Euseb. iv. 23. See also Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i.

tion of cant for sober and good sense is an expedient not peculiar to modern times. It has been in all ages the bane of true religion. Another evil is alluded to by Dionysius in the curious fact, that even before his death his own writings had become interpolated and corrupted. Those who had a craving for "strong meat" mixed the "milk" of older and wiser teachers with stimulating elements of their own, to render it more palatable. Several other matters of interest were discussed by the same Dionysius.

Dioceses. In the regions of Macedonia and Achaia, with Crete and some other islands, there may have been as many as fifty dioceses at the end of the third century.

Italy. We pass on to Italy, containing "anciently some of the smallest and some of the largest dioceses in the world, and yet the same species of episcopacy preserved in them all; the Bishop of Eugubium, as S. Jerome words it, being *ejusdem meriti* and *ejusdem sacerdotii—of the same merit and priesthood* with the Bishop of Rome."[13] In one of the earliest Roman Synods on the Paschal controversy, there were but fourteen Bishops present—few of the Councils at that period being able to muster more. Within a century after, Italy could number more than one hundred Sees. Dioceses were numerous also in Sicily and other islands of the Western Mediterranean.

Spain. The Church of Spain gloried in S. James the Greater as its Apostolic founder:[14] a story full of difficulties,

[13] Bingham, ix. v. 16. The Bishops of Italy and the isles adjacent are all enumerated in *Italia Sacra*, etc., *auct.* D. Ferdinand. Ughello Florentin. Venetiis, 1717.

[14] Ferreras argues stoutly for it: "The preaching of that blessed Apostle in Spain was confirmed by the decision of the Roman Church . . . but though it was even mentioned in the Breviary by the order of the blessed Pope

which the testimony of zealous but modern Spanish writers cannot remove. However this may be, we find it a flourishing part of Christendom in the times of S. Cyprian. At the end of the third century it stands out, in its austere Council of Elvira, as infected more or less with the taint of Novatianism.

Gaul. The Greco-Gallic foundation in Lyons and Vienne suffered terribly in the fifth and sixth persecutions. The Church survived these storms, however; and about the middle of the third century its growth received a new impulse from the mission of seven Bishops (according to Gregory of Tours),[15] who established themselves respectively in Paris, Arles, Toulouse and other central places. One of the seven, Dionysius of Paris, was confounded by subsequent tradition with Dionysius the Areopagite, converted by S. Paul. The great Council held in Arles at the close of this period is a satisfactory proof of the thriving condition of the Gallican Church. About the same time we find proof

The Rhine. of the existence of Bishops on the Rhine and in Vindelicia.[16]

Britain. The Gospel preached in Britain during the Apostolic times, and probably by S. Paul or some of his companions,[17] must have lingered in the island; for in the days of Eleutherus the Roman Bishop, Lucius, a

Pius V., Cardinal Baronius denied it in the 10th vol. of his Annals. His captious reasoning caused Clement VIII. to have it taken out of the Breviary. Nevertheless, when a great number of writers had demonstrated the fallacy of Baronius, and when the Spanish nation and its Catholic kings had made a solemn protest against that reform, the matter was reopened; and after the mature and searching examination usually given in such cases by the Holy See, the judgment was reversed, and by order of Urban VIII. the preaching of the holy Apostle in Spain was reinserted among the lessons of the Breviary." *Hist. Gen. d'Espagne:* Ferreras—D'Hermilly.

[15] See Gieseler, § 57, n. 2. *Gallia Christian.* Pariss. 1716.

[16] Gieseler, § 57, nn. 3, 5.

[17] Stillingfleet, *Orig. Britan.*

petty prince, sent an embassage to Rome in quest of Christian preachers.[18] In the spread of truth, the supply always in a measure precedes the demand. It is probable, therefore, that there was within the island of Britain knowledge enough of Christianity to produce among the wiser princes a wish for more. Eleutherus granted the request; and at the end of this era the blood of several martyrs in the Tenth Persecution, and the presence of three Bishops at the Council of Arles, witnessed the success of their evangelic labors. Prince Lucius.

Thus a belt around the Mediterranean Sea, averaging some two hundred miles in breadth, and occupied by the most vigorous and enlightened nations of the old Roman world, was the field of the first struggle and the first victory of the Gospel. But in reference to this region and this period it may be said most truly, that the Kingdom of God came not with observation. It was for the most part a silent and unrecorded growth. So uncertain are the materials for forming a correct judgment of its extent in reference to the entire population, and so contradictory in some respects are the *data* usually appealed to, that from one point of view the lowest estimates may appear too high,[19] while from another the most liberal calculation seems hardly to give room for all the requirements of the problem. In such a case, the middle ground assumed by most modern writers has little more to commend it than either of the two extremes. Summary.

[18] Bede, *Eccl. Hist.* ch. iv. Stillingfleet combats this tradition (as it seems to me) on very narrow grounds. In Britain, as in Gaul, there may easily have been several successive foundations.

[19] In this question, much depends on the force we allow to rhetorical expressions of some of the Fathers. Where statistics are concerned, rhetoric, as a general rule, is extremely unreliable.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHURCH GROWTH AND LIFE.

Gallienus, A. D. 260.

On the death of Valerian, the Church had rest from persecution for a period of forty years. Gallienus acknowledged it as a *religio licita*—a sect entitled to legal toleration. That this, however, was not an absolute security against heathen violence, was shown in the case of one Marinus in Palestine, who being a prominent candidate for the office of centurion in the army, was accused for his Christian faith by the opposite party, and was on that account cast into prison and beheaded. The reign of Claudius and the first four years of Aurelian were still more favorable to the Christian cause: and though an edict of persecution put forth by the latter in the fifth year of his reign created a momentary panic, yet, its execution being arrested by the sudden death of the Emperor, the rest of the century, including the greater part of the reign of Diocletian, was a season of unwonted peace.

Aurelian, A. D. 270.

Diocletian, A. D. 284.

Progress of the Gospel,

among all classes.

But with every lull in the storm of persecution, the quiet but broad and steady progress of Christianity became more apparent. The time had gone by when its influence could be confined to the bosoms of the devoted few. Its doctrine, more diffusive than its discipline, had penetrated the palace, the senate, the camp, every place in fact but the theatres and temples; had gone beyond the borders of the

Roman Empire; and was becoming so entwined with men's interests and affections, that society could no longer strike it without inflicting wounds more or less serious upon itself.

Had this growth of the Church been tenfold more rapid than it was, it would have been vastly more easy to account for on philosophic principles; history supplying instances enough of sects overrunning large portions of the earth, and gaining a dominant power, in the space of one or two generations. Thus Mohammedanism, for example,—a great martial impulse among a people intensely martial,—swept on to a victorious position upon the swell of a single tide. But the Gospel could boast of no such sudden, uninterrupted and overwhelming triumphs. To win the first and lowest stage of the promised victory; to rise from a position of social degradation to one of ordinary security for life and limb; required ten generations of obscure and persevering struggle. Only here and there, during all this period, did the Church ever appear in other than the servant form. The world the meanwhile was continually agitated: nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; dynasties passing away, philosophies and religions changing, the Empire becoming more and more a sort of chronic revolution. Yet amid all the opportunities thus recurring, Christians alone never struck a blow. During a period in which millions of lives were lost in religious insurrections, the Church alone never for a moment raised the standard of revolt or change. The great Conspiracy alone,—for as such the heathen regarded it,—never conspired, never rebelled; never threw the weight of a feather into the scale by which political destiny was decided.

Growth of the Church slow.

Her servant form.

Her patient waiting.

The problem without precedent.

Now a faith which could survive so long a period of depression is without parallel in the history of successful religious movements: it makes the problem of the Church's triumph so unprecedented, that to attempt to explain it on ordinary principles is simply to ignore what the nature of the problem is.

Gibbon's five causes.

Accordingly, of the five chief causes assigned by a celebrated historian,[1] not one is in any way peculiar to the Church. They are equally applicable to one or other of the heresies with which she had to contend. In zealous abhorrence of idolatry; in confident expectation of a Judgment and Millennium; in the profession of miraculous endowments; in ascetic and enthusiastic virtues; and finally, in a polity popular, flexible and stable in its character, the system of Montanus had a perceptible advantage: besides all which, being later on the ground, and starting free from the encumbrance of Judaic antecedents, it was in a position to avail itself of the experience and to profit by the errors of its hated rival. If such causes, therefore, are to be deemed sufficient, Montanism ought to have become the dominant religion.

Another fallacy.

Another glaring fallacy of the same historian is, that, while he takes delight in exposing the folly, inconsistency and extravagance of the primitive believers, and proves incidentally that all these things were scandals to the heathen, he yet manages to divert them from their true bearing upon the question of the Church's growth. Now victories, of course, may sometimes be achieved in despite of weakness. It is obvious, however, that in proportion to the

[1] *Hist. of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, Esq., *with notes* by the Rev. H. H. Milman, etc., chap. xvi.

amount of weakness proved against a conquering system, the difficulty increases of accounting philosophically for the prosperity of that system; and the necessity of discovering an extraordinary cause becomes more apparent. A heavy drag upon a ship is a sufficient reason to assign for *the slowness* of her progress; but to speak of such a thing as if it helped in any way to account for her progress, is as contrary to philosophy as to common sense.

Strength made perfect in weakness.

But in this respect, the unfriendly hand which has done so much towards exposing the failings and infirmities of the first ages of believers, has rendered a real service to the cause of Truth. No one has done more than the philosophic historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, to show that Christianity had not an easy triumph. Its progress was slow: which gave abundant opportunity for zeal to flag, and for opposition to rally. The contest was not in a corner, or among half-civilized races of inferior type: it was in the centre of æsthetic, scientific, and philosophic culture. The prejudices to be overcome were not those of superstition merely: they were domestic, political, national, religious; interwoven into every thread of that great social web which human wisdom in its perfection had been for so many centuries engaged in weaving. The resistance, consequently, was not a mere fitful gust: it was the stubborn opposition of an intelligent, deep-rooted, and uncompromising hatred. All this appears, unintentionally perhaps, but in colors as true as they are vivid, in the remarkable picture drawn by the skeptical historian. A believer is under no necessity to impugn the substantial accuracy of the portrait. God manifest in flesh—a

Victory not easy.

Strength in weakness.

strength divine made perfect in human weakness—is as prominent in the history as in the doctrine of the Church. The infidel delights in the exposure of that weakness; the believer prefers to contemplate that strength: to appreciate fully the great problem of Church history, it is needful to look at both, and, whatever facts may be found to illustrate either, to admit them in a candid though reverential spirit.

I. Truth and Error.

Considered in its first and simplest aspect, the conflict of early Christianity was an intellectual battle betwixt Truth and Error. It was the sublime theology of the Gospel opposed to a system of superstitions which had lost what hold they ever had upon reason and conscience, and were cherished only as they ministered to pride and lust, or at best to conventional, social or patriotic feelings.

The apologist and sophist.

Of this essential weakness of the opposing side the Apologist was not slow to avail himself. Heathen superstitions, in all their littleness and vileness, were held up to scorn as well as to merited reprobation. But weapons of ridicule were available on either side. The doctrine of the Cross was literally a folly to the Greeks; while to the supercilious and worldly-minded Roman it appeared as a baleful and extravagant superstition. When a Celsus,[2] therefore, armed with the light weapons of an Epicurean indifference, gave loose rein to the spirit of mockery and profanity, ridiculing the Birth, the Death, the Resurrection or the Miracles recorded in the Gospels, he found no lack of hearers and admirers. More-

Weapons of ridicule.

[2] Origen against Celsus preserves several specimens of his style. In Minucius Felix the Roman spirit is better represented. For an account of the writers against Christianity, see Fabricii *Salutaris Lux Evangelii*, etc., cap. viii.

over, what could not be proven against the Truth was easily asserted. The follies and enormities of certain Gnostic sects afforded a handle against the body whose name they assumed; and the heathen mind, from long familiarity with religion as a cloak for vice, could not only impute crimes seemingly incredible, but could give ready faith to the monstrous imputation.

Wisdom against wisdom.

And even in the nobler phases of that long-continued struggle, when Christianity appeared on the positive side and presented herself in her sublime theology or pure morality, she was plausibly confronted by appeals to the older system of the Hebrews, or to a philosophy which chameleon-like could assume the very color of the faith it labored to destroy. Such was the policy of the Neo-Platonic and other syncretistic schools.[3] A Plotinus or a Porphyry could adorn Platonism before the mirror of the Gospel, and then accuse the Gospel of borrowing from Platonism. Christianity, in fact, had much in common with all systems of philosophy and religion. She availed herself readily of whatsoever things were true, honest, pure, lovely and of good report in the learning of the times. When the votaries of human wisdom, therefore, pointed to what was "good and fair" in the lore of the ancient world, and said to the Church, as Israel said to Judah in their strife for the person of David, "We have ten parts in the king and more right than you," it was

The syncretistic schools.

[3] The Dialogue of Minucius Felix, though it gives the victory to the right side of course, does not make the victory too easy by putting only feeble arguments in the mouth of the adversary. It does full justice to the heathen side. A like remark applies to Justin's dialogue with Trypho, and to Origen's quotations from Celsus.

not easy to convince them that the one part of Judah, being the head and life, was of infinitely more importance than the other parts together. The victory, in short, seemed to hang long in even balance. For it was not a simple contest between Truth and a sheer Lie. The Lie came to the battle armed in the attributes of Truth. The rods of the magicians could assume the shape and semblance of the Lawgiver's rod. If the latter at length proved superior, it was owing in the main to its greater vitality and endurance. The rod of Moses conquered by swallowing the other rods.

Vitality of Truth.

II. WITNESS UNTO BLOOD.

Where the Apologist was deficient, the Martyr by his simple witness unto death was somewhat more successful. Yet even here the cause of Truth had a heavy drag upon it. To a sober and philosophic Pliny, or to the acrid genius of the great historian of the first Cæsars, martyrdom seemed little else than a headstrong and penible absurdity.[4] The witty Lucian could discern nothing in it but food for laughter.[5] And the confessors themselves, as we have seen often enough in the course of early Church history, were not always an ornament to their glorious vocation. It was, therefore, only by little and little that the seed sown in blood took root and grew: only by oft-repeated mowings that the thin grass thickened into a solid sward. It was not by martyrdoms, in short, for Error has its martyrs as well as Truth: but by ten generations of continuous martyrdom—the witness unto death being but the pledge of a life-long universal witness under social and political annoyances of every possible

Martyrs.

[4] "Inflexibilis obstinatio." [5] *De morte Peregrini.*

description—that the Church was enabled to prove herself in earnest; to purge society of that fearful frivolity wherein after all the strength of heathenism lay; and to outlive, if not to overcome, the power of misrepresentation.

Follies and scandals.

The Church's pride in her martyrs proved also a source of weakness, by opening the way to a sort of hero-worship; these worthies being regarded as immediately exalted to a share of the reign and judgment-seat of Christ.[6] Hence a fondness for relics. Hence a dangerous predilection for cemeteries as places of worship. Follies of this sort were more or less rebuked, and were not so bad as in later times. They were patent enough, however, to provoke the ridicule of the heathen, and to turn the edge of the Christian argument against polytheism and idolatry. What troubles were occasioned by the popular reverence for confessors, has been sufficiently noticed in previous chapters of this Book.

III. Signs and wonders.

The spread of the Gospel continued to be accompanied more or less with faith in the assistance of supernatural powers. Of miracles, indeed, in the strict sense of the word,[7] there are few instances re-

[6] The popular belief that Martyrs went at once to Heaven tended to something like worship of them as intercessors with God. S. Cyprian endeavors at least *to put off* this deification of them: "We believe indeed that the merits of the martyrs and the good works of the righteous avail much with the Judge; but *when the day of Judgment comes*, when after the end of this world the people of Christ shall stand before His tribunal." In the same way, he insists upon the *condition*, on which the intercessions of the martyrs should be found available: "For the penitent, for the diligent, for the prayerful, He can graciously make acceptable what the martyrs have asked and what the priests have done." *De Lapsis*, 17, 36. See Tertull. *de Pudicit.* 22; and Dionysius of Alexandria *apud* Euseb. vi. 42.

[7] Miracles, that is, which, the *facts* being admitted, *must* be ascribed immediately to the Power of God. See, on this subject,

corded, and those not attested by eye-witnesses of the facts. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Apologists, is chary in his appeals to evidences of that kind; and though supernatural gifts are mentioned both by him and by Irenæus and Tertullian as still subsisting in the Church, yet the instances alleged,—*the healing of the sick*,[8] *the cure of the bite of serpents* and *the exorcising of demons*,—belong to a class of wonders which, without a minute knowledge of all the circumstances, or without the corroborating evidence of signs less equivocal, no one feels constrained to receive as divine acts. The charisms ceased gradually as the need of them ceased.[9] They pertained to the first planting rather than to the growth of the Church. So far as the like of them occurred in later times, they seem to belong to that lower class of wonders, in which faith operates through[10] and not over or against the mysterious energies of nature.

Charisms temporary.

But for this latter class of wonders there may have been a real need in the age now under review. Each era of the world has its own spiritual and in-

Douglas's *Criterion*, Farmer on *Miracles*, Kaye's *Tertullian* and *Justin Martyr*, and Middleton's *Free Enquiry*.

[8] The raising of the dead mentioned by Irenæus, is expressly distinguished by him from the miracles of our Lord. Euseb. v. 10.

[9] "Not even in the earliest ages of the Scripture history are miracles wrought at random .... nor are they strown confusedly over the face of the history, being with few exceptions reducible to three eras: the formation of the Hebrew Church and polity, the reformation in the times of the idolatrous kings of Israel, and the promulgation of the Gospel. Let it be observed, moreover, that the power of working them, instead of being assumed by any classes of men indiscriminately, is described as a prerogative of the occasional *prophets*, to the exclusion of the kings and priests." Newman's *Apollonius of Tyana*.

[10] See explanation of the cures wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, and other like cases, in Douglas's *Criterion*.

tellectual wants; and a faith which aims to be useful, instinctively addresses itself to those wants, as commonly understood at the time. Now the world in which the early Christians moved, was one that believed in the reality of demoniacal possessions. Hence a universal faith in magic and divination. Christians were on a level with their age in point of scientific knowledge. As to the agency of demons, they knew as much, or as little, as the world around them knew. But they were superior to their age in believing that the powers at which heathenism trembled had been brought into subjection by the virtue of the Cross, and in the holy Name of Jesus might be effectually vanquished. Hence the direction that faith instinctively assumed. The Exorcist kept his place in the Church,[11] when prophecy, miracles and tongues had ceased. Without pretending to be wiser than the science of the day with regard to the mysterious border-land[12] of the natural and supernatural, Religion felt itself to be more powerful than science. Heathenism was confronted in its strongholds of magical pretensions. The demons that philosophers invoked, and before which philosophers trembled,[13] believers set at nought and put un-

The magician and the exorcist.

[11] But when the Council of Laodicea decreed (can. 26) that no one should *exorcise*, either in public or in private, *unless ordained by a Bishop*, the belief in exorcism as "a gift" was manifestly on the wane. This Council is variously dated from 314 to 372.

[12] Middleton, in his *Free Enquiry*, seems to leave no place for this middle ground—this *terra incognita* of dreams, visions, presentiments and the like—but attributes all wonders of every kind to mere jugglery: a very lame philosophy to any one who believes that there is such a thing as a soul. See Dodw. *Diss. Cypr.* iv.

[13] Gibbon, with his usual art, represents the philosophers as resorting to magic, by way of rivalry to Christian exorcism. The reverse is certain. Simon Magus, Elymas and Apollonius are types of a class that flourish-

der a ban. And the result was on the whole favorable to their cause. Whether the wonders wrought by the Christian *thaumaturge* were many or few; whether strictly superhuman, or merely the effect of an enthusiastic faith working through certain latent energies of nature: they were at all events wrought in good conscience; they were confidently appealed to;[14] they had the effect of making Christians superior to *the fear* of the black arts resorted to by magicians; and it was felt among the heathen that against a peculiar and mysterious class of evils, to which the whole world was held in hopeless subjection, the Name of Christ was more powerful than any other name.

Faith superior to science.

Enemies made friends.

There was a deeper and broader effect from wonders of a more spiritual and less exceptionable kind. The conversion of men "from enemies into friends" was the glory of the Gospel. These conversions, sometimes instantaneous, especially at scenes of martyrdom, but more frequently the result of gradual conviction, were numerous enough to keep up a steady increase of the Church, even in times of disaster and persecution. On the other hand, while many fell away from timidity or weakness, few of these relapsed into heathenism. They merely bent before a storm they were not able to resist. As soon

Weak members.

ed long before and long after the Gospel was preached.

[14] Tertullian's challenge (*Apolog.* 23) can leave no doubt of his belief in the reality both of demoniacal possession, and of the power of exorcism: "Let some one be brought forward here at the foot of your judgment-seat, who, it is agreed, is possessed of a demon. When commanded by any Christian to speak, that spirit shall as truly declare itself a demon as elsewhere falsely a god." For references to similar statements of Irenæus, Justin M., Tatian, Origen, Minut. Felix, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Eusebius, see *note* to Oxf. Translat. of Tertullian, vol. i. p. 57.

as the storm passed, these men of little faith returned; and there was no ignominy they would not submit to, no hardship they would not endure, to win their way back to a place among the *standing* brethren.

IV. DISCIPLINE.

It was probably the large proportion of timid disciples of this sort that gave so rigid a form to the discipline of the early Church.[15] Before the third century there was already a *catechumenal* probation of three years preparatory to baptism: a custom for which we look in vain for any Apostolic precedent. For those who lapsed or fell into open sin, there was an exclusion from communion of three or four years; during which term the person doing penance was not allowed to enter the body of the Church. In all this there was a tendency towards legalism, or towards an over-sharp distinction between the "perfect" and the imperfect.[16] It may have been, also, that the probation before baptism fostered a disposition to defer as long as possible the open and full confession of the Name of Christ. A strict discipline, however, seemed necessary for the times. And as the Bishops retained

[15] Tertullian (*de Præscript.* 41, 42) makes discipline a note of the true Church. To let heathen come into their assemblies was *to give that which is holy to the dogs*, to *cast pearls before swine*. Heretics he represents as perfecting (baptizing) catechumens before they were taught; as allowing women to teach, and even to baptize; as admitting *novices* (persons recently converted) to the Ministry, and allowing them to continue in secular pursuits, etc. It is easy to see, however just his censures may be in the main, that in some points they would condemn the practice of Apostolic times: 1 Cor. xiv. 23–25; Acts, xvi. 27–33.

[16] This distinction the Manichæans carried out in its utmost rigor: the "hearers" and the "perfect" were with them almost different *castes*. On the subject of Discipline, see Kaye's *Tertullian*, ch. iv.; also, Bingham's *Antiquities*, Marshall's *Penitential Discipline*, Morinus *de Disciplina*, etc., Bates's *Coll. Lectures on Chr. Antiquities*, etc. For other writers on this subject, see Fabricii *Lux Evangel.* ix. 7.

in their own hands a power of indulgence or mitigation, the evils resulting from it were probably less for a while than the power it gave the Church over a loose crowd of well-meaning, though feeble and timid members. Whatever its merits may have been, it continued in its strictness hardly more than a century.

A temporary system.

V. STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.

The numerical strength of the early Church has been so exaggerated by hatred on the one side, and by a too sanguine faith on the other, that it seems impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The ancient mind was not arithmetical; and when it passed beyond thousands into the region of myriads, it was more apt to fly on the wings of fancy than to keep to the foot-pace of prosaic calculation. From such statistics as remain, it is probable that in the middle of the third century Christians could in few of the large cities have counted more than one twentieth of the population as on their side.[17] But this twentieth part was not a mere crowd, it was a disciplined host. It was to be found, moreover, and with the same characteristics, in all parts of the Roman world. This fact considered, there is enough to account for the *ingens multitudo* of Tacitus, for the *partem pœne majorem* of Tertullian, and similar vague expressions of other writers, without taking such phrases to the letter, or torturing figures of speech into figures of

[17] Gibbon (ch. xv.) makes on the whole a fair calculation. For copious reference to passages suggesting a higher estimate, see *note* to Oxford Translation of Tertullian, vol. i. p. 3. From Tertull. *Apolog.* 37, it seems possible that among that select population who had the right of *citizenship*, Christians were *a majority*. If so, the large expressions both of Christian and heathen writers are easily accounted for: the rabble and the slave population counting for nought in their estimate of numbers. See Milman, book ii., ch. ix., *note*. The large and (one may say) absurd calculations formed from the *supposed* number of bodies in the Catacombs have been noticed in chap. iv. of this Book. The reason of *heathen* exaggeration may be seen in Deut. ii. 25.

arithmetic. It is certain that the Christians were far less numerous than the heathen. It may be on the whole, therefore, more true to say that the power of the Church led to an unconscious exaggeration of its numbers, than that its numbers in reality increased its power.

VI. Catholic unity.

A vastly greater influence is to be ascribed to the Catholicity of the Church, the Unity of the Episcopate, and the way in which, under a popular but stable form of government, general and local interests had become welded into one.

The Episcopate a college.

The Apostolic episcopate or oversight of the Churches was in its essence *collegiate:* a fact sufficiently manifest in the joint calling, training and commissioning of the Twelve, in their joint residence for so long a time in Jerusalem, in their subsequent meetings and conferences, and in the way in which each, after their dispersion, became the nucleus of a new band or college of Apostolic fellow-laborers. But the collegiate principle applied to the general interests of the Church.[18] In matters of local interest each Apostle seems to have acted with the utmost freedom and independence.

Local Episcopate.

At a somewhat later period, when the number of chief pastors was greatly multiplied, and the limits of jurisdiction proportionally narrowed, there was (humanly speaking) a danger of an undue development of the principle of *local*, *diocesan* or *independent* episcopacy. There is something that looks like this in the writings of S. Ignatius.[19] A Bishop

[18] This was shown in the question of circumcision. S. Paul might have settled it by his independent inspiration; but it was thought better that a matter of common interest should be settled by common consent. Hence the Council in Acts, xv.

[19] *Looks like it,* only; for it is obviously unfair to construct an *Ignatian theory* out of a few *obiter dicta* in one or two Epistles. If,

in his own city-see, supported by his own crown of Presbyters, regarding himself as speaking and ruling in Christ's stead and responsible for his conduct to Christ alone, might easily degenerate into a puny lord spiritual, isolated within his own narrow circle, and as absolute in pretensions as weak in real power. But as heresies increased, the oneness of the Bishopric showed itself to be the divinely appointed safeguard against this peril. A common cause enforced common counsels. Through Synods holden regularly once or twice a year in presence of the whole body of the brethren, and through canons requiring at least two Bishops to concur in consecrations,[20] the Episcopate became established in its proper Apostolic form of a *collegium:* a commonwealth, that is, of *colleagues* or *brothers*, all supporting a common burden, and each responsible to all for the portion he upheld.[21]

Synods.

From this accrued many obvious advantages. Though Ecumenical Councils were as yet impracticable, the Provincial Synods maintained a strict concert with one another;[22] and the Church Catholic was knit together by a living web of intercommunion, pervading the remotest quarters of the great Roman world.

Intercommunion.

however, a theory be thus constructed and opposed to the *Cyprianic theory*, the contrast is decidedly in favor of the latter. The Bishop of S. Ignatius (that is, according to certain critics) has very much the air of a spiritual autocrat. But the Bishop of S. Cyprian is an officer sternly and closely limited from above, from below, and in fact from all around. Dodw. *Dissert.* vii.

[20] Apostol. Canon i.

[21] Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur: S. Cypr. *de Unit. Eccl.*

[22] In these Synods the *representative* idea was prominently brought out: Concilia ex universis Ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in communc tractantur et *ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani* magna veneratione celebratur. Tertull. *de Jejun.* 13.

Bishops mutually accountable.

It was not the least of the advantages of all this, that it nipped in the bud any tendency that might exist towards absolutism, on the part of Presbyters or of Bishops.[23] However a pastor might feel disposed to lord it in the circle of his own labors, there was a vast body of his peers, by whom on complaint from any quarter he could be called to an account. One of the highest positions in all Christendom, conjoined with powerful court credit, could not save Paul of Samosata from trial and deposition; and it

[23] Thus the attempt of Victor and Stephen in Rome was checked effectually by Irenæus and Cyprian. In summing up his statement of the *primacy* in Rome, Döllinger candidly remarks:—"But we must confess that the power of the Roman pontiff, and his relations to the universal Church, *were not yet fully developed.* . . . . It was in *the natural order of events*, that the *formation of particular Churches should precede*, and that the connection of the bishop with his clergy and flock should be firmly established: *then came the time* for the institution of the metropolitan authority, etc." On which I remark: (1) The *supreme* power in any society is always the first to be *developed*. Time merely limits that power by developing lower functions, with a system of checks and balances. Thus Moses and Aaron were more distinctly and absolutely the supreme power in Israel than any of their successors. (2) The "natural order of events" in the early Church was *first* Christ the Head, *then* Apostles representing Christ, *then* great metropolitan foundations (Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, etc.), *then* Churches everywhere. In other words, it was from the head down through the members, not up through the members to the head. The highest powers of the Church were the first manifested. If, then, a papal supremacy was the highest power of all, we ought to find it most clearly exhibited from the first. (3) The arguments for *Episcopacy* and *Papacy* are essentially different from one another. Episcopacy we see clearly in Cyprian, Ignatius, James of Jerusalem, *the Apostles;* and nowhere more clearly than in *these last.* Papacy we see clearly in Gregory VII., less clearly in Gregory I., less clearly still in Silvester, least clearly of all in the first three centuries. As it approaches its supposed fountain-head, it becomes so dwindled down that even Döllinger, in defending it, has to call it a *primacy*—not a supremacy. But a primacy differs from a supremacy, as the power of a constitutional president differs from that of an autocrat or absolute monarch. See Mosheim's *Commentaries*, Cent. ii. § 20–24: (Murdock's *Translation*). On *Development*, see W. Archer Butler's Letters; also, Brownson's Quarterly (1847–8).

was only a timely explanation that saved Dionysius of Alexandria. The wholesome working of this system is witnessed by the fact, that while on all other subjects men differed and formed sects; while the Creed and the Scriptures were exposed to the violence of controversy; yet, in the matter of government there was a wonderful agreement: even the heretics and schismatics, the Montanists, Manichæans, Novatians, Donatists and Meletians had all hierarchies similar in form at least to that of the Catholic Church.

Episcopacy universal.

Local polity.

While the general government of the Church was thus powerfully controlled and self-limited, local interests were managed in an equally admirable way. That polity, on the whole, has most vital force, which within limits of mutual respect allows the freest exercise to individual gifts, and employs those gifts most largely for the benefit of all. In the early Church, the solid and balanced strength of an Apostolic Episcopate was the support and guaranty of such wholesome liberty. Hence, in Pentecostal times, the liveliness with which the charisms were exercised in the assemblies of the faithful.[24] No ill-compacted system could have endured such a strain upon it, without falling into disorder. So, in later times, the number and activity of the orders of the sub-ministry;[25] the popular influence of the Virgins

Exercise of gifts.

[24] 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

[25] In the Roman Church (A. D. 250) there were *subdeacons, acoluths, exorcists, readers, janitors,* (Euseb. vi. 43); to which may be added *copiatæ* (who attended to the burial of the dead), *catechists,* and others; though some of these were "functions" (like the charisms of Pentecostal times) rather than "orders" proper. In the Apostolic canons *subdeacons, readers* and *singers* are put in the same category with *laymen,* so far as discipline is concerned (canon 43). On this subject see Bingham's *Antiquities,* Book iii. See, also, *Constitut. Apostol.* ii. 57; viii. 19–26, 28.

and Confessors; the frequent meetings of the whole body of the People; the exciting elections of Bishops and Presbyters; the trials of the lapsed or other offenders, in the presence of a deeply interested crowd, half-witnesses, half-judges; the eager interest, in short, that each member of the community took in the administration of the discipline, the charities and the finances of the Church: all this would have led to inextricable confusion and to schisms without end, had not a balance-wheel been provided in the constitution of an Episcopate, which, being Catholic as well as local, could concentrate the strength of the whole Body upon any particular point. Thus in the Novatian troubles at Rome, in the sedition of the five Presbyters at Carthage, and in the resistance made by Paul's party at Antioch after the condemnation of that heretic: Cornelius, Cyprian and Domnus were sustained by the authority of their colleagues all the world over. On the other hand, when the People were the aggrieved party,—as in the case of the Churches of Leon and Astorga in Spain,—the ready intervention of the Episcopate at large neutralized the aggressions of any particular prelate, even of the energetic Roman Stephen.

Varied functions.

The balance-wheel.

Instances.

A polity so flexible and so strong, so popular in its action and yet so conservative in its basis, was doubtless an element both of growth and of solid influence to the Church. Another influence, closely akin to this, is the power of Christian life; a subject already anticipated in part, but meriting in some particulars a more exact consideration.

VII. CHRISTIAN LIFE.

In the servant stage of her pilgrimage, in times of persecution, when led as it were into the wilderness and kept apart, the Church had to be in a peculiar

Domestic ties loosened.

sense "the household of faith:" not the complement merely of social and domestic ties, but in a very large measure the practical substitute for them. The first effect of the Gospel was to break up family relations. Husband was set against wife, and wife against husband; and a man's worst enemies often were those of his own house. Tertullian, indeed, paints a glowing picture of that home in which man and wife were one in the same faith; and thereby shows incidentally how much Christianity was doing to elevate and refine the conjugal relation.[26] But the very glow of the picture creates a suspicion that fancy furnished some of the brightest colors. It is remarkable, also, that children have no place in the matrimonial paradise thus depicted. It is still more remarkable that the effect of the picture, on the whole, is to discourage wedlock rather than promote it. The simple truth was, that, living in a world each breath of which was pestilential to all but the strongest natures,[27] a believer shrank from matrimony in proportion as the ideal he had formed of that blessed state was drawn from the pure precepts of the Gospel; or, if marriage from any cause seemed to be unavoidable, he dreaded at all events the responsibility of an increasing family. In a society still heathen, with just light enough to show the foulness of its enormities, children could seldom be regarded as arrows in the strong man's quiver: they

The Christian ideal of home not favorable to marriage while the world remained heathen.

[26] Tertull. *ad Uxor.* lib. ii.

[27] To appreciate that "present distress," which led to an undue development of the *encratite* spirit, one must have a notion of the indescribable turpitude of heathen morals; but to give an idea of this, even under the veil of Latin, would render a book unfit to meet the eye of the ordinary reader. The state of modern heathenism, in this respect, is suggested as plainly as Christian decency permits, in the very trust-worthy book of Mr. R. B. Minturn, Jr., "From New York to Delhi."

were too easily perverted into weapons for his spiritual foe.[28] To be childless, therefore, or, if the burden of offspring were imposed, to see them depart early to a safer and better world, was considered by many a legitimate desire. There are, nevertheless, many blossoms of early piety in the annals of those times. Attention was paid, also, to Christian education.[29] On the whole, however, a genial domestic tone was not conspicuous among the graces of the period. The pruning of the vine had fallen to the "wild boar out of the wood," and the more tender shoots of the plant were naturally the first to suffer.

Children not desired.

Under these circumstances, the life of the early Christians,—their *polity* as S. Paul appropriately terms it,—was public and churchly to an extent inconceivable in our days. To say that believers were assiduous in communion or common prayer, gives but a faint notion of the real state of things. The *ecclesia* was, to them, not a mere place of worship: it was a synod, a council, an ecclesiastical exchange;[30] in short, an assembling of themselves together for devotional, social, charitable and business purposes.

The Church a council.

In the morning they met, to the great disgust of

[28] "Shall we seek burdens, which even the gentiles for the most part avoid? . . . . burdens not only troublesome to us, but perilous to faith—": Tertull. *ad Uxor.* i. 5. The frightful amount of pauperism, with exposure of infants, prostitution, and other crimes, led many of the Fathers to believe that the world was overstocked. See Chastel's Essay on the *Charity of primitive Christians.* S. Cypr. *epistol. ad Demetrianum.*

[29] Infant-baptism was favored by the Church, and even infant-communion. But prudential considerations led many devout persons, such as the mother of S. Augustine, to reserve the blessing for later and safer years. Tertullian was a decided advocate of such delay.

[30] Churches, therefore, were sometimes called *Synodi, Concilia, Conciliabula, Conventicula.* Bingham's *Antiquities,* viii. i. 7. For the order observed in Church see *Apostol. Constitut.* ii. 57.

Rites and worship.

the heathen, for the "daily bread;" and as they went forth from these antelucan meetings, they were known to be Christians by the smell upon their breath of the *merum matutinum*.[31] The sacrament was still a communion in the strict sense of the word. In the celebration of it there were but few departures as yet from Apostolic simplicity. Tertullian notices,[32] as customs resting on tradition, that it was received before day-break, from the hands of the Bishop only, and with great care not to spill the wine or to drop any particle of the bread. Moreover, on one day every year, oblations were made for the dead in commemoration of their *birth-day:* that is, of their entrance into everlasting life.[33] The consecrated elements were carried to the sick by deacons. Communicants sometimes took with them a portion of the bread, and tasted it before each meal. The Eucharist was usually celebrated in Church: it was not as yet forbidden, however, to celebrate it in prison, or in other unconsecrated places. It is probable enough, that by the end of the third century it was accompanied with an increase of ceremonial. The sacrament of Baptism

Customs.

[31] The daily Eucharist seems to have been the custom of Rome, Carthage, and some other places: see Bingham, xv. ix. 4; also, S. Cyprian *de Cœnâ Dom.* The weekly Eucharist was probably the general rule.

[32] Tertull. *de Coron.* iii.; see notes to the Oxford Translation.

[33] The names of the departed were inscribed upon writing-tables called *diptychs*, and after being commemorated, were erased to make room for others. The offerings made by the friends of the departed contributed to support the charities of the Church. The prayers offered *pro dormitione* were founded on the principle announced by S. Cyprian: "Let us always be mindful of one another . . . . and *pray for one another* wherever we may be . . . . and whichever of us shall be permitted to be soonest with the Lord, let his love for all endure, and let him entreat the Lord's mercy without ceasing for his brothers and sisters." *Ep.* lvii. *ad Cornelium.*

had already admitted many additional observances. Previous fasting, exorcism, renunciation, unction, trine immersion, recital of the Creed, use of sponsors, and after the day of baptism a week's abstinence from daily washing, are among the peculiarities mentioned by early writers. The worship of the Lord's Day was signalized by standing in prayer, fasting and kneeling being prohibited. To this it may be added, that signing with the cross was practised on all occasions.[34]

The Agape.

At night Christians came together in a more sociable way for the *Agape*, or Love-feast: a sober but cheerful repast, which the rich provided, and which to many of the poorer brethren must have been the principal meal of the day.[35] These feasts already in the third century were becoming more luxurious and less religious than was consistent with good order, or even with good morals.[36] It would seem, however, that such misuse was only occasional, and was connected with mortuary repasts, rather than with the love-feasts proper. Indeed, many kinds of night-meetings were customary among Christians: which gave occasion of scandal to the heathen, and could hardly fail to be attended more or less with disorders and abuses.[37]

Its abuse.

[34] Tertull. *de Cor.* iii.

[35] "Our feast showeth its nature in its very name. It is named by the word which in Greek stands for *love*. . . . If we aid every poor man by this refreshment, it is not to enslave their liberty, not to fill their bellies at the expense of their self-respect, but to be like God, taking special thought for men of low degree." Tertull. *Apolog.* 39.

[36] The earliest canonical notice of abuses in the love-feasts seems to have been in the Council of Laodicea: *can.* 27, 28.

[37] Hence, *can.* 35 of Elvira: "Women are forbidden to keep vigils in cemeteries, lest under the pretext of devotion crimes be perpetrated." The passion for stimulating services in cemeteries and over the *martyria* seems to have led off believers to

Mutual sympathy.

There was enough in the vicissitudes and perils of the times to give a peculiar zest to these frequent meetings. Through that wonderful network of fraternal sympathy, the Communion of Saints, no part of the Body could suffer without all feeling with it.[38] A brother, for example, after a long journey from Antioch or Jerusalem, having saluted all the sister Churches by the way, arrives in Rome, bearing credentials from his Bishop. Perhaps he has with him a handkerchief or a garment, stained with the sacred blood of some recent martyrdom. He is hospitably received. The first brother he meets is glad to entertain him. His feet being washed and his wants attended to by the *sister* and *conserva*, the devout wife of his host, in the evening he is presented at the Agape; and the brethren all salute him with "the kiss of peace." It is needless to go into the particulars of such scenes. To any one who has studied the heart of the old classic world, so child-like and so strong amid its manifold corruptions, it is easy to see that the *non-resistance to evil* inculcated in the Ecclesia, and so miraculously maintained for three hundred years, was no stagnation in the flow of earnest life, but rather the token of a mysterious and divine controlling power.

Hospitality.

Heathen calumnies.

But a heathen, to whom not a syllable was breathed of the nature of this *politeia*, except as he could extort a half-confession from a reluctant wife or a stammering slave, and who knew nothing of the control-

the meetings of heretics. Concil. Laodic. *can.* 9.

[38] "Communicatio pacis, appellatio fraternitatis, contesseratio hospitalitatis:" Tertull. *de Præscript.* 20. Even the scoffing Lucian was struck with this feature of Christianity: "It is incredible to see the ardor with which that people help one another in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator has put into their heads that they are all brethren."

ling influence of the Sermon on the Mount, would naturally regard it all as a sort of permanent *conspiracy*. It was to be expected that such an one should curl his lip with scorn, as he spoke of Christian *love*;[39] that the opprobrious word *stupra* should be associated in his mind with the antelucan Feast; that his abhorrence should find vent in *caricatures*, some of which, in all their fearful blackness of mingled calumny and profanity, are still occasionally exhumed amid the living death of Pompeii;[40] that he should regard the Church, in short, as a slumbering volcano, the outbreak of which might at any moment involve the whole social fabric in ruins.

Daily life blameless.

And this, indeed, was the wonder of early Christian life: a stumbling-stone to many, yet to others a means of irresistible conviction. The life of the Ecclesia, so mysterious, so hated, so suspected, was accompanied in the case of individual believers with a daily walk, quiet peaceable and self-restrained, in which calumny itself found it difficult to detect a serious flaw. A heathen husband might, indeed, be vexed at the plain attire of his Christian wife; he might look upon it as an unseasonable display of gravity, when she shuddered at the profanities of his worldly guests or declined being amused at their unseemly jokes: her rising from his side at night to utter a prayer; her visits, if allowed, to the night-meetings for devotion or to the hovels of the poor for charity; her taking of a bit of bread reserved from the matutinal Feast before each meal;

Peculiarities.

[39] The famous phrase, "See how these Christians *love* one another," was sometimes not a compliment, but an indecent taunt. See Minut. Fel. *Octavius*.

[40] The *Graffiti* or wall-scribblings of Pompeii have shed a light upon some peculiarities of the early Church. See an Article in the Edinburgh Review (1859).

her gesture of abhorrence in presence of idol-worship; her frequent use of the sign of the Cross; these and other peculiarities might annoy him not a little, and in some of them his superstitious fears might lead him to suspect a taint of magic:[41] yet, on the whole, when he found that wife to be patient, quiet, helpful—the greatest contrast imaginable to the frivolous spouses of his neighbors—there would be a strong inducement to look more closely into the reality of her religion.

Their virtues not popular.

But, on the other hand, the Apologists had to complain that there were husbands, fathers and masters to whom wanton wives, profligate sons and eye-serving slaves were less offensive, on the whole, than Christian inmates in their houses. From causes already mentioned, the virtues most apparent among believers were those of the extraordinary and heroic type. There was little room for the qualities most prized in heathen society. Patriotism could not flourish under the frost of continual persecution. Public spirit could be hardly more than a name, when to serve the public in any capacity was to be implicated in the sin of idol-worship. Military merit was much hindered from a similar cause, though the army seems to have been regarded with some favor.[42] So with all the amenities of social and friendly conviviality; with the observance of holidays, feasts, amusements and public or private entertainments. The peculiar charm which classic culture had thrown over all the fashions of the world, was but the graceful covering of a mass of

Lack of public spirit.

[41] Tertullian *ad Uxor.*—in which every word is a window, revealing the secrets of home-life.

[42] Military service was objected to by Tertullian, Origen and others; but chiefly on account of the danger to faith and pure morals. That Christians were quite numerous in the army there can be no question. Tertull. *Apolog.* 5, 37, 42. See *note* to Oxford Trans. of Tertull. p. 184.

moral putrefaction. Each flower concealed a serpent. Each grace was so entwined with the tendrils of a wanton polytheism that, to escape defilement, Christians were fain to eschew "the king's meat" and to thrive on the "pulse and water" of a bare sufficiency. Hence, even the arts were looked upon with suspicion. The painter or sculptor who became a convert to the Gospel, did so at the sacrifice of his professional livelihood. By degrees, however, there was a relaxation in this respect. The poetry of life, so closely pruned for a season, began to bud forth again; and, amid the touching memorials of the saints who slept, the elements of an elevated, pure and intensely Christian art began to settle upon the Church, as quietly and spontaneously as dew upon the grass. The great-hearted *Fossor*[43] could not leave his labor of love, without inscribing upon it some tender symbol, some edifying parable. The Cross, the Dove, the Lamb, the Good Shepherd and, most popular of all, the Ichthus[44] or Fish, the Ark, the Gourd of Jonah, the heaven-sailing Ship, the four-headed River of Paradise, the Rock smitten by Moses, or even a few heathen images suggested by the Sibylline Books, such as Orpheus with his lyre charming the beasts, marked the resting-places of those who having fallen asleep in peace awaited the promised dawn of a joyful Resurrection.[45] But such

Aversion to the arts.

Christian symbols.

[43] The *fossores* or delvers were characters of no little importance in the Roman Church: see Perret, Aringhi and others on *the Catacombs*. On the general subject, see Didron's *Christian Iconography*.

[44] Anagram for ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ — Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour.

[45] The Council of Elvira in Spain (A. D. 305) forbade pictures in Churches, "lest the object of worship should be depicted." It is probable from this that pictures (as distinguished from mere symbols) had begun to be used in Churches; though it was a long time before they came into open and undisputed use, even as orna-

Serious views of life.

things were luxuries for the Catacombs. In controversy with the heathen and in the walks of every-day life, Christians were rigidly unæsthetic and utilitarian.[46] Fashionable festivity was to them but a ghastly grin upon the face of death. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that in the eyes of that numerous class, common to all ages, who value present comfort more than honesty and truth, believers were looked upon as a sunless race, *lucifuga natio*, hateful to the *lares* and *penates* of a lively Roman home.

Charities

While nothing was further from the mind of the early Christians than communistic notions,[47] yet nothing was more frequently reported of them, whether for censure or for praise, than that "they had all things common." The love-feasts, already mentioned, were associated with a well-known maxim of our Lord,[48] and gave the rich an opportunity to

to the poor,

cheer the hard lot of the poor, without injury to the sentiment of honest self-respect. "As the elm supports the vine, and is beautified by it," so the rich were to support the poor in such a way as to cherish in them genial and amiable affections. Other objects of charity were the confessors in prison; the desti-

to widows,

tute families of the martyrs; the care of widows and

ments. Eusebius speaks of portraits of Christ and the Apostles, but as a matter of *heathen custom* only: *Eccl. H.* vii. 19.

[46] "Flowers were made to smell, not to crown dead bodies with," a Christian is made to say, in the *Octavius*. Tertullian speaks in like manner: *de Coron.* v. Even Clement of Alexandria, who lived in a Church community already wealthy and luxurious, shows no indulgence to the ornaments and superfluities of life. See *Pædagog.* passim. In the burial of the dead, however, cost was not spared.

[47] See the admirable essay of the Rev. Stephen Chastel on the *Charity of the Primitive Churches:* translated by G. A. Matile; also, C. Schmidt, *Essai historique sur la Société*, etc. Paris, 1853; F. de Champagny, *la Charité Chrétienne*, etc. Paris, 1854; A. Tollemer, *Œuvres de Miséricorde*, etc. Paris, 1853.

[48] S. Luke xiv. 12; compare Constitut. Apostol. ii. 28.

orphans, who were placed under the particular charge of the Bishops; the rearing of children exposed by their parents; the rescuing of a few at least from that vast flood of uncared-for souls which set in towards the brothels, the bridewells, the galleys, or the schools of the gladiators. Life among the ancients was held very cheap: souls still cheaper. Cato, a model of domestic virtues, boasted that he kept no worn-out slaves. When the Gospel came, it partly found and in part created a more humane feeling.[49] Still, the abominable treatment of the *familia* by heathen masters, during this period, may be inferred from the fact that, horrible as were the tortures inflicted upon the Martyrs, they were after all but the ordinary punishments of refractory slaves. The *eculeus* or rack was an almost necessary implement in a heathen home. Now the Church, by inculcating a true religious equality of men in all conditions, and by putting her anathema upon such cruelties, for example, as the selling of slaves to gladiatorial schools, did much towards remedying the worst and most inveterate evils of the system. Indiscriminate manumission she could not encourage: indeed, she was obliged to forbid it, except where there was a reasonable prospect to the freedman of an honest livelihood, or where the manumitter engaged to be his patron or protector.[50] For it was not the

orphans.

slaves.

Manumission.

[49] I do not think it necessary (with Chastel and others) to ascribe the humane sentiments of Seneca, Trajan, Pliny, Antoninus Pius, and other amiable heathens, to any supposed knowledge of the Gospel. That old Roman world was human, not diabolic. As such, it had its share of good Samaritans, worthy publicans, and benevolent centurions, a thousand-fold more deserving of praise than such whited sepulchres as Cato. If there had been no humane feeling, the humanity of the Gospel would not have been appreciated.

[50] Among the Canons bearing

least among the cruelties of the times, that masters often freed their servants to escape the burden of their support; thus adding to that rabble of famished wolves by which the great cities were infested. The redemption of captives was another channel of benevolence. So with the struggle against the famines and pestilences, by which the ancient world was so frequently desolated. So, again, with the burial of the dead; which being sadly neglected by the heathen, the Church had to bear more than a double burden.

Other channels of benevolence.

Sources of income.

To meet these and similar claims required, on the part of the Church, an almost boundless liberality: more especially as the burden was laid exclusively upon the faithful. But the supply never failed to come. In the language of Clement of Alexandria, Charity was not a cistern, but a well: the more it was drawn from, the clearer, the sweeter and the more abundant its flow. And that it might flow freely, all factitious supplies were rigorously rejected. To give, was to communicate with the altar: to be at variance with the altar was to lose the privilege of giving. When Marcion the heretic was excommunicated, his liberal donations, amounting to the sum of two hundred thousand *Sestertii*, were cast out with him.[51] In the same way, the offerings *pro defunctis*, namely, the lavish oblations prompted by affectionate remembrance of those who slept in the Lord, were not accepted, nor was the name of the deceased pronounced in the prayer *pro dormitione* which formed part of the Eucharistic

Offerings.

on the subject are Ap. Can. 82, and Gangran. 3. See also *Apostol. Constitutions*, iv. 9. For much interesting matter on this point, see Chastel's *Charity*, etc.

[51] Tertull. *adv. Marc.* iv. 4.

Service, unless he had departed in the peace of the Church.[52] The acceptance of the gift was involved in the acceptableness of the giver. Hence not free-will offerings merely, but the free-will offerings of an holy worship, were the ordinary sources of revenue. These, given weekly or monthly according to the ability of the giver,[53] were divided into three portions—one for the clergy, one for Church services, one for charities of all other kinds; and were dealt out daily, under the direction of the Bishop and Deacons, to these several objects. It was one grave charge against the Montanist prophets, that they accepted salaries,[54] instead of trusting each day to furnish its own supplies. They preferred cistern-water to that which came fresh from the spring. But among the Catholics, in addition to the amount that flowed in regularly from the sources above-mentioned, there were occasional contributions for particular purposes; and not unfrequently it happened that the old Pentecostal ardor broke forth anew, and wealthy converts, on entering the Church, or more especially on election into the ministry, put their all into the sacred treasury,[55] and were content thenceforward to live

Three objects.

Free gifts.

[52] S. Cyprian. *Ep.* i. Tertull. *de Monogam.* 10.

[53] In exhorting to liberality, the Church naturally referred to Pentecostal times, to Jewish tithes, first-fruits, etc., for the measure in which individuals should give. There was no sort of compulsion, however; and the clergy were not allowed to exact pay for any special religious services.

[54] This seems to be the drift of the sharp invectives of Apollonius, Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* v. 18. The followers of Theodotus the Byzantine adopted the same custom. Such a business-like arrangement offended the religious instinct at first, because it looked too much like taking thought for the morrow. Like many other heretical inventions, however, it crept into the Church, and stayed there. See Münter. *Primord. Eccles. Africæ.* xxii. 7.

[55] Eusebius speaks of this as

of the altar. Thus there was always enough for all emergencies. The fountain might now and then choke for awhile by the accumulations of worldly prosperity; but when persecution came the obstruction rapidly disappeared, and charity flowed freely and copiously as before.

Mark of the early Church.

It will be seen, therefore, that even in the point of liberality, the Primitive Church had a mark of distinction from other ages. Whatever she accomplished in that way was done simply in faith, and in the Name of Christ. There was little or no help from that vague philanthropy which, like the promised "signs"[56] of the Gospel, may be said to "follow them that believe;" being, in fact, an accompanying power of the Truth, an attendant of Christian civilization in general, rather than a product of personal belief. In the first three centuries there was no Christendom, no Christian world. There was nothing of that moral atmosphere, warmed by the Gospel if not quickened by it, of which a far-reaching, enlightened and scientific benevolence, —feeding the poor, healing the sick, casting out devils from the social system, and doing many wonderful and noble works,—is a characteristic feature. The Church and the world then were in deadly antagonism. Christianity was, in fact, the Church in the

Opposition to the world.

common in the first and second age: iii. 37. In after-times, Cyprian and Gregory Thaumaturgus are well-known examples of the same liberality.

[56] Mark, xvi. 17, 18. The promise was fulfilled to *the letter* in Pentecostal times; *in the spirit* it is fulfilled in the hospitals, homes, asylums, universities, and other charities of Christian civilization; also, perhaps, in the scientific subjection of the elements of nature: a power by which Christendom is as far in advance of heathendom, as the Apostolic Church with her miracles was in advance of the age in which *peregrinabatur*—she was "a pilgrim."

wilderness. Every thing around was barren and hostile to her; and Charity, to exist, was obliged to be armed at all points in the panoply of a simple, uncompromising Creed.

Militant spirit.

On the whole, the power of Christianity was more manifest, during this period, than its softer and milder traits. It was not a time such as that described by the Prophet, when "old men and old women" could "dwell in Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age; or when the streets of the city" could be "full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." It was an era of Martyrs, Confessors, Doctors, Virgins and Anchorets: a camp-life, as it were, having a glory and beauty of its own; a sternly militant age, in which a man would part with his raiment to purchase him a sword, and in which the grace of endurance was preferred to virtues more comfortable and ordinarily more prized. The perfect fruit of the period, its peculiar and supernatural grace, was that of *non-resistance to oppression*. Nor was this virtue a mere softness on the part of Christians,—a mere abstinence from riots, insurrections, plots and rebellions. It was an armed watch set at the very door of the lips. For three hundred years there was a society pervading the Roman world, consisting of men of every class and condition, and horribly oppressed, which, during all that period, did not even talk or think resistance.[57] However the yoke might gall

Non-resistance.

[57] "How often do ye spend your fury on the Christians .... in obedience to the laws! How often doth the hostile mob attack us .... with stones and fire! With the very phrensy of Bacchanals, they spare not the Christians even when dead ..... And yet what retaliation for injury have ye ever marked in men *so banded together, so bold in spirit even unto death?*—though a single

them, they simply waited in quietness and confidence till the Hand that had put it on them should graciously take it off.

Patient continuance.

And this quiet persistence was undoubtedly the secret of their strength. There were, as we have seen, corruptions among the early Christians, abuses, follies, superstitions. Scandals, perhaps, were almost as numerous in proportion to the number of believers as in any other age. Yet, on the whole, amid changes going on all around, the Church alone stood firm and unalterable, witnessing to the same Truth, and witnessing in the same way, for three hundred years of almost continuous persecution. During all that period the Preacher preached, the Apologist explained, the Martyr died, the Bishop ruled, the Priest ministered, the Deacon gathered the poor, the Exorcist banned the demons, the Fossor delved in the bowels of the earth: in a word, the Church kept together. But the same power which kept the Church together kept the Truth together. When the end of the first trial came, and the fourth century opened upon a day sevenfold more laborious than any that had gone before it, it found the mass of the faithful through the world still united in one doctrine, one discipline, one worship, one spirit: a unity the more amazing that it was free and spontaneous, and ac-

night might with a few torches work out an ample vengeance, *if it were lawful with us* that evil should be met by evil . . . . . Would strength of numbers and forces be wanting to us? . . . . We are a people of yesterday: yet we have filled your cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, *your very camp*, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum! . . . . For what war would we not be sufficient and ready . . . . who so willingly are put to death? We could fight against you even unarmed and without rebelling . . . . by merely separating from you . . . . and leaving you to tremble at your own desolation . . . . a vacant tenement for unclean spirits." Tertull. *Apolog.* 37. See also Origen. *contra Cels.* lib. iii.

companied with every form of partial inconsistency and weakness. Where one martyr had bled two hundred years before, there were now hundreds prepared to bleed for the same testimony. Now this persistency could proceed only from faith. And faith in such a connection is but another word for life. In a living faith, therefore, not only unparalleled in itself, but exhibited under circumstances without parallel in the history of mankind, we find the secret of the continued existence, growth, and triumph of Christianity through the first and critical era of its manifestation.

Living faith.

CHAPTER IX.

TIMES OF DIOCLETIAN.

The forty years of peace, mentioned in the beginning of the last chapter, contributed not a little to the prosperity of the Church and to its growth in point of numbers. Bishops, no longer persecuted, began to be treated by all classes with a marked respect. Not a few Christians served in the household of Diocletian, countenanced by the faith of Prisca his wife and Valeria his daughter. There was, in fact, no position of trust that was not open to them; the good-will of the princes having gone so far as to relieve them from all necessity of conformity to the state worship. It naturally followed that converts came in by crowds. The old places of worship had to be enlarged. New churches, spacious, magnificent and solid, were erected in all the chief cities.

Forty years of peace.

Prosperity and wealth.

Sacred vessels of gold and silver, collections of sacred books, and perhaps treasures of other kinds, began to accumulate in sufficient quantity and splendor to be a temptation to the eye of the spoiler, and to add another to the many causes of persecution that still existed, though hidden for the time by a deceitful show of peace.

Corruption.

The usual attendants of prosperity were not slow to follow. Discipline was relaxed. Worldliness came in as a flood. The Episcopate, reverenced by the faithful and honored by infidels, presented itself as a prize of spiritual ambition.[1] Hence quarrels, intrigues, factions; all the evils, in short, with which the Church was created to contend, and for the warfare with which the long ages of martyrdom and of rigorous discipline were a barely sufficient preparation.

Two Augusti and two Cæsars, A. D. 286, 292.

What cause it was that led to a change of policy on the part of the Emperors, has been somewhat variously stated. It is only known that the able and prudent Diocletian, having divided the burthen of government, first with the rude soldier Maximian, whom in reference to his own proud title of *Jovius* he surnamed the *Herculius* of his administration; and afterwards with the two *Cæsars*, Galerius whom he stationed as a bulwark on the banks of the Danube, and Constantius similarly set for the defence of the borders of the Rhine; and having strengthened this quadruple scheme by a skilful interlacing of matrimonial ties: proceeded with singular success to crush the innumerable enemies of the empire; and crowned a long series of victories in

[1] Euseb. viii. 1.

Britain, Gaul, Africa, on the Rhine, the Danube and the Nile, by the extraordinary glory of a triumph over those inveterate rivals of Rome, the defiant and for a long course of years indomitable Persians. He had thus attained the summit of human glory and success. The repose of mind and body for which he sighed was now fairly within his reach. Under these circumstances, some evil genius—most probably Galerius, who passed a winter with the Emperor in his palace at Nicomedia just after the Persian war,[2]—suggested to his mind that one enemy of the empire, more obstinate than the Persians, remained not only unconquered, but threatening if not soon checked to carry the whole world before it. This enemy was

A. D. 303.

Designs against the Christians.

[2] L. C. F. Lactantii, *de Mortibus Persecutorum. Lutet. Paris.* 1748. The spirited narrative of this writer is sharply criticized by Gibbon and Milman; though neither of them deviate from it in any material point, and where they do, it is with very little reason or show of authority. Lactantius was probably an African by birth, a disciple of Arnobius, and an able rhetorician—"the Christian Cicero." Invited by Diocletian he removed to Nicomedia some time before the persecution, and remained there probably during the ten years. He was intimate with the Christian and other members of the imperial household. On the whole, he had greater facilities for correct information about the events he describes than commonly fall to the lot of contemporary historians. Gibbon's objections to him, or rather his insinuations, are: (1) that he was an *obscure rhetorician;* i. e., a man devoted to literary labors—an objection that would apply to most historians; (2) that *he wrote to flatter the pride of the victorious court*—to which it is answer enough, that his book is dedicated, not to princes, but to an humble confessor; (3) that he is *a passionate declaimer*—a remark that applies equally to Tacitus, and to all historians of any feeling who are called to describe the deeds of tyrants. The objections made to the authenticity of this treatise *de Mortibus Persecutorum*, are founded chiefly on a supposed inferiority in point of style to the other works of Lactantius. On the other hand, there are many marks of his style; and the less careful polish may be owing merely to the fact, that the author, when he wrote, was more in earnest than in some of his other essays. On this and similar points, see notes to the Edition mentioned above, *Le Brun, Dufresnoy* and others.

the Church. Particular cases could be mentioned of a dangerous fanaticism in this mysterious body. A youth in Africa of the name of Maximilian had pleaded scruples of conscience against serving in the army, and had undergone death rather than consent to serve. Another Christian, Marcellus a Centurion, had on a public holiday suddenly thrown away the ensigns of his office, abjured carnal weapons, and refused any longer to do the bidding of an idolatrous master. He also suffered death rather than submit. Could such examples be tolerated by a sovereign who had brought all the world to his feet? Could a sect be allowed to flourish and to hold places of high trust in the very Palace, which fostered such ridiculous and rebellious scruples?[3] Galerius, for his part, had already answered the question. He had weeded his own army of the dangerous sect. So also had Herculius, the valiant leader of the West.[4] It only remained for Jovius, the wise and victorious inspirer of their counsels, to complete his great services by a triumph which no one before him had been able to achieve, and to leave the Empire to his successors a united and homogeneous whole.

Pretext for it.

Christians expelled from the army.

To suggestions of this kind many particular influences were added. Hierocles[5] the philosophic leader of a revived paganism, did what he could for

Special motives.

[3] These instances are taken by Gibbon from the *Acta Sincera*, Ruinart. In both cases the fear of idolatry was probably the cause of the scruple, though a feeling against the lawfulness of war was entertained by some Christians.

[4] Euseb. viii. 4, mentions that many had to sacrifice or leave the army; but only a few here and there were put to death. The story of the Theban legion, which belongs to this period, is not related by any contemporary writer.

[5] He wrote against Christianity, and tried to prove that the works of Apollonius of Tyana were superior to those of Christ. He was answered by Eusebius and others. See Fabric. *Lux Evangel.* cap. viii.

the cause. So, also, the mother of Galerius, a fanatical devotee of idols. Finally, the oracle of Apollo at Miletus being consulted, the extermination of Christianity was declared necessary to appease the long offended gods of the Empire.[6] Under such incentives, seconded by the innumerable pleas to which the ears of princes are open, Diocletian's hesitancy at length gave way: he decided on a general persecution, and appointed a day for the inauguration of a decisive religious war.

The war begun, A. D. 303.

It was the twenty-third of February, the feast of the Roman god Terminus: a day selected, says Lactantius, *ut quasi terminus imponeretur huic Religioni.* A little before the dawn, the Prætorian Prefect with a crowd of army and state officers repaired in a body to the Church of Nicomedia,—a noble edifice which crowned a commanding height in full view of the Palace, and in a densely built quarter of the city. The doors are forced open. There is an eager rush and fruitless search for some visible object of worship. The Holy Scriptures are found and committed to the flames. A general pillaging ensues. Diocletian, who looked on from the Palace, thought it imprudent to gratify Galerius with the spectacle of a conflagration; but the Prætorian guards being sent, with siege instruments of every description, the sacred pile, whose lofty site and solid structure had excited the jealous suspicion of the heathen, was in a few hours levelled with the ground.

Plan proposed.

The example thus set was an index of the scheme of the more prudent and perhaps more clement Diocletian. To destroy the churches of the Christians,

[6] The Oracle replied that it could not speak, "on account of certain righteous men." Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* ii. 50, 51.

to seize and burn their holy books, to break up their Assemblies, and by the strong hand of power to prevent their ever reuniting, was the plan he seems to have proposed to himself. This example was followed even in those parts of the Empire where from motives of clemency or secret favor life and liberty were respected.

Edict of outlawry.

The next day came the expected edict from the Palace.[7] Christians of every grade were declared incapable of any office or public trust; freemen were disfranchised, slaves forbidden to hope for freedom; the courts of law were to be closed against the whole body; and whatever they might suffer, they could sue for no redress. When this edict was put up, a certain Christian, fired with a zeal more natural than evangelical,[8] rushed forward and tore it down. "It is a triumph," he exclaimed, "of the Goths and Sarmatians!" For this he was put to the torture, roasted before a slow fire, and finally thrown into the flames; all which he endured with admirable and heroic patience.

Palace set on fire.

But severe as this edict was, it fell short of the wishes of the pertinacious Cæsar. He continued to ply Diocletian with arguments and complaints; and it served to give force to his urgency, that twice within the following fortnight the Palace was found to be on fire. The first time, according to the ac-

[7] The various edicts of this persecution are found in Euseb. viii. 2, 3, 6, 8, 10; and *de Martyr. Palest.* 3. Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 13 et ss. See Fabric. *Lux. Evangel.* cap. xii.

[8] Gibbon's sneers at this and a few similar cases of natural though intemperate zeal are sharply rebuked by Guizot, and mildly disapproved by Dean Milman. See notes to Milman's Gibbon, chap. xvi. Lactantius, it is to be observed, praises only the courage of the man who destroyed the edict: his act he expressly condemns. Eusebius, however, seems rather to approve it: viii. 5.

count of Constantine,[9] it was struck by lightning. The act, however, was on both occasions generally attributed to an incendiary; though who the guilty party was, no inquiries nor even tortures could discover. It was only known, that every body was examined except the servants of Galerius. He, however, was clamorously indignant; conducted the investigations himself; laid the whole blame to the Christians; and finally left the Palace in well-feigned alarm. After his departure no further attempt was made. Cause unknown.

Diocletian by such arts was worked into a fury unworthy of the character for prudence he had hitherto maintained. His wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria were forced to sacrifice. The Eunuchs of the Palace, among whom Dorotheus, Gorgonius and Peter are particularly mentioned by Eusebius, were tortured over a slow fire and at length put to death. The Christians of Nicomedia experienced a similar treatment. Some were gathered in companies, without regard to age or sex, and consumed within a ring of flames. Others, with heavy stones attached to them, were cast into the sea and drowned. To terrify others, unheard-of tortures were invented.[10] Cruelties inflicted.

There have been periods in history when Christians, separated from their kind by an unnatural asceticism, in an age of barbarous manners, or amid the madness of revolutionary times, have inflicted similar sufferings upon their fellows. In behalf of such it may be pleaded, that they insanely believed themselves to be Similar cruelties in other times.

[9] Constantine, in his *Orat.* chap. xxv., mentions the lightning. Lactantius mentions two fires, and attributes them both to Galerius. Milman well observes, that if a Christian fanatic had been the culprit, he would have avowed the deed and gloried in it.

[10] Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* xv. Euseb. viii. 6.

doing God service. Their cruelty, therefore, may be set down to the hallucinations engendered by a solitary life, or to the phrensy of long-continued civil or domestic warfare. No such excuse can be made for the magistrates of Diocletian's day. They were husbands, fathers, citizens, men of sagacity and experience, living in an age of domestic tranquillity and security, and votaries of a religion which made tolerance its boast. When we see such men, therefore, not only persecuting a peaceable class of their fellow-creatures, but using all the appliances of science to prolong the agony and sport to the utmost limits of endurance, we behold a depth of depravity beyond which, it is to be hoped, none deeper can be imagined. If any can be found, it is in the unfeeling profanity which, in an age still more enlightened and more human, can palliate such doings and coldly take part with the oppressor against the oppressed.

No excuse for them.

General account.

It is beyond the plan of this history to go into the particulars of the long and cruel war which for ten years was carried on against the unresisting Christians.[11] It extended into all the provinces, except the Gauls. There Constantius Chlorus complied with the wishes of the elder Sovereigns so far as to demolish the church-buildings: the true temple, says Lactantius, he left unmolested. His underlings, it is probable, were not in all cases equally forbearing. Britain, at this time, received its first baptism in blood: S. Alban, two citizens of Chester, and sundry other persons in other places, having been put to death.[12] In the rest of the provinces believers of either sex were

S. Alban in Britain.

[11] In the 8th book of Eusebius, and in the work of Lactantius, there are details enough: also in Ruinart. *Acta Sincera.*

[12] Bede, *Eccl. H.* cap. vii.

burned, drowned or slaughtered, not singly but in crowds. The prisons and mines were filled with confessors. Virgins were ravished or driven to the alternative of suicide. The sacred books and vessels were seized and destroyed: those who refused to give them up were put to the torture. Officers were stationed at the temples to force the people to sacrifice; and that no Christian might have a chance of justice, altars were set up in the courts and in front of the tribunals, so that the judges could not be approached without offering to idols.

Course pursued.

Of the number that suffered it is difficult to obtain a satisfactory account. Basing the calculation upon nine Episcopal Martyrs particularly mentioned by Eusebius, and upon the ninety-two Martyrs of Palestine commemorated by the same writer, Gibbon would reduce the whole number to about two thousand persons. But Eusebius does not profess to give more than a list of those cases which were known to himself or were particularly edifying. Of the hundreds who were barbarously mutilated and condemned to a lingering death in prison or in the mines, he makes only a passing mention.[13] He also avoids particularizing those whose martyrdom was sullied in his opinion by anything unworthy of so honorable a calling. Now it is a well-known fact that follies and infirmities are often accompaniments of heroic self-devotion. The roll of

Number of martyrs.

[13] See B. viii. 13; also, *Mart. of Pal.* ch. 13. For Eusebius's common way of giving only noted examples see, also, viii. 6; iii. 33; v. *preface;* vi. 1, etc. That believers were slaughtered *in crowds* has the testimony of Lactantius, xv., and Euseb. viii. 9, 11, etc. Eusebius's profession (viii. 2 and *Mart. Palest.* 12) to omit *particulars* both of calamities and of follies and dissensions that led to those calamities, is quoted by Gibbon as evidence against his honesty; but, in computing the *number* of Martyrs (a matter upon which it bears materially) the profession is conveniently forgotten.

Select list.

the Palestine Martyrs, therefore, is, on every reasonable supposition, only a select list; and bears probably the same relation to the whole number that suffered, as the names of officers in a gazette to the undistinguished victims of the rank and file. The persecution was undoubtedly a mighty effort to crush Christianity. More than once the tyrants boasted that they had succeeded in the attempt.[14] That in such an endeavor, continued for ten years, they accomplished nothing more than the death of some two thousand persons, is as contrary to reason as to the testimony of all early writers.

The Emperors abdicate, A. D. 305.

In the mean while Diocletian, having celebrated his Persian triumph in Rome and returned to Nicomedia, came to the rare determination of resigning his authority and retiring into the shades of private life. A tedious illness, with an ever-increasing sense of weariness and disgust, gave force to the philosophic reasons which may have led to this resolve. A greater weight was attributed by some, and with no little probability, to the ambitious urgency of his imperious son-in-law, the Cæsar Galerius. However this may be, abdication is a dangerous experiment to one who has made a free use of absolute power. Diocletian resigned with a show of dignity. But it was with undisguised reluctance that the Western Augustus Maximian, bound by a previous oath to his colleague, and, as Lactantius suggests,[15] influ-

[14] Trophies were set up at Clunia in Spain and elsewhere: Diocletianus Jovius, Maximianus Herculius, . . . *nomine Christianorum deleto* . . etc.; or, *superstitione Christi ubique deleta,* cultu Deorum propagato. Baron. *Annal.* an. 304.

[15] The highly probable account that Lactantius gives of these transactions, is somewhat injured by his throwing it (according to classic precedents) into a *dramatic form.* Milman thinks that the picture drawn by "the coarse and unfriendly pencil of the au-

enced by the threats of Galerius, followed the extraordinary example, and retired to a solitude which he eagerly left again as soon as a favorable opportunity presented.

Policy of Galerius.

The empire of the world devolved upon Galerius in the East, and Constantius in the West. To reconstruct the quadruple scheme of Diocletian, it would have fallen to each of these two to nominate a Cæsar. Galerius took the whole arrangement into his own hands. By a politic stroke, in which the feelings of the abdicating sovereigns seem to have been as little consulted as those of Constantius, he presented to the army two ignoble creatures of his own, under the title of Cæsars. One of these, Severus, he sent to Italy; where he staid long enough to make himself odious by a terrible system of exactions, but was soon confronted, overwhelmed and slain, in the revolt of the usurper Maxentius the son of Maximian: which latter had been easily persuaded to resume the purple. The other, named Daza or as he was afterwards called Maximin, was commissioned to tyrannize over Egypt and Syria. A third prize which Galerius had within easy reach, and which he was reserving for his old friend and comrade Licinius, was snatched from his eager grasp by the superior promptitude of young Constantine, the son of the Western Emperor, Constantius. This young man, born before his father had attained the rank of Cæsar,

Severus.

Maximin.

Escape of Constantine.

thor of the Treatise" is inconsistent with "the profound subtlety" ascribed to Diocletian's character. But no *profound* subtlety is attributed to him. It is merely the common-place cunning of laying the blame of his cruel actions upon his counsellors: "qui severitatem suam alienâ invidiâ vellet explere." Eutrop. ix. 26. To this kind of character the portrait drawn by Lactantius is perfectly true. Indeed, it is true enough to Diocletian's character, even as softened and excused by the skilful pen of Gibbon.

and deprived of all hopes of the succession by the new matrimonial arrangements which followed that event,[16] had attached himself to the service of Diocletian, and at the time of the abdication was one of the most promising officers of the army. Galerius was aware of his importance, and laid a skilful plan to secure him. But the young soldier was on the alert. Stealing a march on the crafty approaches of the tyrant, he sped from Nicomedia as fast as post-horses could carry him; and arrived at Boulogne just in time to accompany his father on an expedition to North Britain, to receive at York a dying blessing from his lips, and to be forced by the not unwelcome violence of the army into the adoption of the title of Augustus. The announcement of this was sent, with many plausible excuses, to the Eastern Emperor. He received it in grim acquiescence. Conceding to Constantine, however, only the secondary title of Cæsar, he conferred the name of Augustus on his favorite Severus; but, this latter soon going to wreck before the triumphant usurpation of Maxentius, the honor finally devolved upon Licinius for whom he had from the first designed it.

Constantine elected by the army.

Licinius.

Six heads, A. D. 308.

Thus the Roman world was partitioned among six masters: Galerius, holding a trembling balance between two Augusti, Maximin and Licinius, in the East; and the old warrior Maximian, nominally respected by Constantine and Maxentius, in the West: under all of whom, except Constantine, the edicts of persecution continued to be enforced against

[16] Constantius divorced Helena the mother of Constantine, and married Theodora the daughter of Maximian. In the same way, Galerius had to marry Valeria Diocletian's daughter.

the Christians. But the number of oppressors was rapidly reduced by various reverses.

Fearful end of Galerius, A. D. 311.

In the East, Galerius giving himself up to dissolute living, fell a prey to that horrible and loathsome disease, which is famous for having quelled the pride of two other distinguished persecutors, Herod the Great and Philip II. of Spain. He was almost literally eaten up of worms.[17] A tumor, badly healed, festered into a spreading sore, which became a nest of innumerable vermin and filled the whole Palace at Nicomedia with its pestilential effluvia. In vain Apollo was applied to for relief. Nurses and physicians could approach the sick man only at the peril of their lives. Under the torture of this fearful plague, his body visibly corrupting from day to day, but his mind still struggling with natural feelings of remorse, he at length put forth an edict of toleration, remarkable for its apologetic and almost penitent tone.[18] "It had been his wish," he declared, "that the Christians should be reclaimed from the folly of forming a separate society in the state, and should return to the customs of their fathers. Many had been put in peril of their lives, some had been punished with death. But, inasmuch as the greater part continued obstinate in their delusion, and were falling into a state in which they neither worshipped the gods nor served the Deity of the Christians, therefore it seemed best, in accordance with the uniform mildness and clemency of his reign, to grant them a certain indulgence; that they might hold their assemblies as before, and entreat their God for

Edict of toleration.

[17] Lactantius describes it with a fearful minuteness; *de Mort. Pers.* xxxiii.: also, Euseb. viii. 16.

[18] Given at length in Lactantius, xxxiv., and Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* viii. 16.

the safety of the Emperor and the State as well as for their own, that prosperity and security might everywhere abound."

Maximin.

In the contest for empire between Maximin and Licinius which followed the tyrant's death, this tardy indulgence was of little avail to the Christians. Maximin, indeed, seemed for awhile to have relented; and, encouraged by edicts from him similar to that of Galerius, the Christians came forth from their concealment with hymns of joy, and resumed the celebration of their sacred rites. The treacherous calm lasted hardly six months. At a hint from the Emperor petitions came in from the principal cities, that measures of severity might be resumed. Persecution began once more, but in a milder form: persuasion, intimidation and punishments short of death, being strongly recommended.[19] At the same time an effort was made to give greater dignity to pagan worship. Priests and high-priests, of decent moral character and of high social rank, were appointed. A gorgeous ceremonial was devised. The old gods, revamped, as it were, with new attributes adopted from Christianity, were set up in splendid shrines, and propitiated by feasts and sacrifices and magical incantations.

A brief calm.

Reform of pagan worship.

Weapons of contempt.

On the other hand, the Gospel was assailed with the weapons of ridicule. Forged acts of Pilate,[20] full of blasphemies against Christ, were widely circulated, and taught to young persons in the schools. The dignity of dying for the Faith was denied to believers. Tortured and mutilated, with their eyes

[19] Many, however, were put to death; and among others Peter the Martyr, Bishop of Alexandria. See Euseb. Book ix.

[20] Euseb. ix. v.

put out, or branded with other marks of shame, they were hidden away in dungeons or banished to the mines. So elated was Maximin with the apparent success of his endeavors,—the gods smiling upon him, as he proclaimed, in teeming harvests, genial seasons, and in the unexampled prosperity of his dominions,—that he carried the religious war beyond his own borders into the Christian kingdom of Armenia, and succeeded in establishing the persecution there.

Conquest of Armenia.

But his confidence was soon shaken by a terrible series of reverses. First, his insatiable licentiousness inspired universal execrations: the eunuchs, who scoured the provinces for victims to his lusts, making the vile quest more odious by gratuitous insults and indignities. Tax-gatherers followed the eunuchs, and, if possible, were still more hated. Then came a general drought and an unprecedented famine. The rich were reduced to beggary, beggars were massacred or drowned. An awful pestilence followed close upon the famine. In the midst of these calamities the charity of believers was enabled to shine forth again. Amid despair and desolation they did their duty to the sufferers of every kind. Not content to visit and relieve the sick, they fought with the street dogs for the abandoned bodies of the dying or the dead. At length, Heaven smiled once more upon the despairing provinces. Maximin, defeated by Licinius, first turned his rage against the pagan priesthood who had incited him to civil war; then wandered wildly from place to place, attempting to rally his resources; till at length taking poison, but not in sufficient quantity to destroy life at once, he was slowly eaten up by an internal fire,

Terrible reverses.

Charity of the Christians.

End of Maximin, A. D. 313.

and so miserably perished.[21] Before his death he issued a new and ample edict of toleration and redress to the Christians; in which he apologized for himself, and laid all the severities of the persecution to the door of the officers and judges.

Church of Tyre.

The splendid Church of Tyre, demolished during the persecution, but now rebuilt on its old site with greater magnificence than ever, signalized in one place the restoration of Christian worship. The example was followed in other cities. The death of Maximin was not merely a deliverance of the Church; it was accompanied everywhere with a joyful munificence, an uncalculating zeal in restoring her waste places, and a promptness of restitution on the part of the heathen, that showed her to have gained, even in things temporal, far more than she had lost.

Maxentius in the West.

In Italy and North Africa, Maxentius, the twin monster of Maximin,[22] a prodigy of superstition, cruelty, rapacity and lust, had in the earlier days of his usurpation pretended to favor the Christians. Having succeeded, however, in gaining the goodwill of the army by largesses and flattery, and having by the aid of Maximian his father baffled all the efforts of Severus and Galerius, he gave himself over to the fiend of licentiousness, and became an object of abhorrence to all his subjects alike. Like Maximin he indulged in a wantonness of debauchery, which set all law and all social ties at defiance. The maid or matron that once attracted his eye, had no refuge from dishonor but in self-destruction. So-

[21] The horrible description of his end is given with much fulness by Euseb. ix. 10.

[22] Euseb. *de Vita. Const.* i. 33–38; *Eccl. Hist.* viii. 14; Zosim. *Hist. Nov.* lib. ii.

phronia, a Christian lady, wife of the Prefect of the city, adopted this mode of escape. The tyrant's minions were ready imitators of his foul example. To make his turpitude complete, the vague religious feeling which had inclined him at one time to favor the Church, led him finally into a mire of the most grovelling and insane superstitions. Whether he persecuted directly for religion's sake, is somewhat doubtful. It is more probable that the sufferings of the Christians under his reign, were consequences of the general state of outlawry in which the edict of Diocletian had placed them, rather than of any particular hostility on the part of the western tyrant.

His superstition.

The old chief Maximian, who on his son's usurpation had resumed the purple and the title of Augustus, and had been his main stay in military affairs, soon found his alliance unendurable, and took refuge with Constantine in Gaul. But the unhappy old man was a restless agitator. Twice detected in treason against his host and son-in-law—for Constantine had married his daughter Fausta, receiving with her as a dowry the coveted title of Augustus—he was allowed no other mercy than that of "free death," and perished ignominiously by his own hand.

End of Maximian.

Maxentius eagerly availed himself of this as a pretext for a quarrel. He hated Constantine intensely; and when the latter, with a zeal more creditable to his justice than to his humanity, followed up the death of his wife's father by erasing his titles, and throwing down his statues, the opportunity for a display of filial piety was considered too good to be neglected. Maxentius immediately gave orders, throughout Italy and North Africa, to overthrow the images of Constantine. In the contest that

War proclaimed.

ensued, the latter did not wait to be attacked. With a promptitude and energy which entitle him to a high place among military leaders, he conducted his small army across the Cottian Alps; routed the best generals of Maxentius in several well-contested fields, and marching steadily and rapidly towards Rome, finally overwhelmed the usurper in a great battle under the walls of the city. Maxentius was found drowned in one of the marshes of the Tiber. Before he had left Rome for the decisive field, he had taken care to consult the Sibylline Books. *On that day* ran the answer of the prudent oracle, *the enemy of the Romans shall perish.* The Romans indeed rejoiced that their enemy had perished; and the acclamations which greeted the conqueror were those of men who had nothing more to lose, and consequently every thing to gain, from a change of masters.[23] All this happened about a year before the death of Maximin. It was followed by an alliance between Constantine and Licinius, and by a series of events in the East, already in part related.

Victory of Constantine, A. D. 312:

End of Maxentius.

Thus Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East, both of them favorably disposed towards the Christians, remained to divide the Roman world between them, or, if necessary, to contest the supremacy by a renewal of bloody strife.

Constantine and Licinius.

In the mean while, the almost forgotten Diocletian had lived long enough in his chosen retreat at Salona, to taste the bitter fruits of the seeds of tyranny he had sown. Whether he troubled himself with the afflictions of the Empire is by no means certain. At all events, no influence for good was allowed him.

Diocletian at Salona.

[23] Euseb. *Vita Constant.* Zosimus, *Hist.* ii.

It is probable, that he was soon made aware of the necessity of receiving passively and in silence whatever might befall him.

Fate of his wife and daughter.

Valeria his daughter had been given in marriage to Galerius,[24] to whom she bore no children, but performed faithfully the duty of a mother to Candidianus, his illegitimate son. On the death of the Augustus, the beauty and wealth of the widowed Empress proved an irresistible bait to the brutal Maximin. But Valeria rejected his advances with becoming dignity. She was therefore sent into exile, with her property confiscated, her reputation blasted, her attendants subjected to the torture, and her female friends put to death on foul and false accusations. When tidings of this came to Diocletian, he ventured to entreat of the monster that his daughter might be suffered to share his retreat at Salona, and comfort his last moments. His humble petition was in vain. Afterwards, on the triumph of Licinius, a gleam of hope, founded on the debt of gratitude due from that conqueror to Galerius, induced the princess, accompanied by her mother Prisca, to throw herself on his mercy and seek the protection of his court. She was the more easily led to this from learning that Candidianus was in favor there. She was soon undeceived. Candidianus, as also Severianus the son of Severus, had imperial blood in them, and were therefore put to death. Fearing a similar fate, the two empresses fled, in the disguise of peasants. After fifteen months of wandering from place to place, all Asia the meanwhile resounding with their woes, they were at length discovered and re-

His petition rejected.

[24] Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 39–41.

cognized at Thessalonica. Their doom had been long since pronounced. In the presence of a great crowd of people, they were both beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea.

His own end, A. D. 313.

Such was the sad end of Diocletian's family. Of his own latter days little is known beyond an uncertain rumor, that, maddened[25] by the ingratitude and neglect of all whom he had benefited, and by the pitiable fate of the few who might be supposed to have cherished some affection for him, he withdrew from the troubles of life, as he had fled from those of empire, by a voluntary act. His death, however, has been attributed by some to dropsy, by some to poison, and by others to a protracted state of *insomnia* in which he was unable to take food or rest.[26]

CHAPTER X.

THE VICTORY OF CONSTANTINE.

THE victory of Constantine was the beginning of the triumph of the Christian Religion. When he first announced the bold plan of attempting with hardly

[25] Milman and Gibbon make light of the story of Diocletian's madness. Eusebius and Lactantius both mention it. The latter says that, after his long illness previous to his abdication, *he revived, but not wholly; for at certain times he was insane*, but at other times in his senses. The humorous philosophy he displayed in his retirement, and his famous *bon mot*, that no man who can raise his own cabbages ought to covet the cares of empire, are not inconsistent with such intermittent insanity. Witty men are not necessarily sane men.

[26] Lactant. xlii.

more than forty thousand available soldiers,' the conquest of Italy defended by an army of at least four times the number, his friends remonstrated, and his officers could not refrain from murmurs of disapprobation.[2] But the boldness of this scheme was as nothing, compared with that which he was destined to undertake and to achieve. It was no less than to abjure the old traditions of the Empire, and to identify himself with an apparently broken and certainly unmilitary party, which neither in his army, nor in Italy, nor in Rome, nor in the Empire at large, was of any political importance; and which could nowhere claim to be more than a respectable minority of the population. To ascribe such a venture to mere political calculation, is to affirm a greater wonder than any of those recorded in legendary fiction. Nor can we set his conduct to the account of any deep affection for the Gospel, or for its persecuted followers. His life was hardly that of a true Christian man. Indeed, he never professed to be other than an outside pillar of the Church; and his baptism was deferred till just before his death. These things considered, Constantine's own account[3] of the matter seems more simple

Constantine takes the Christian side.

[1] Zosimus gives him eighty thousand men in all; but, as Gibbon shows, not more than half that number could have been spared for the campaign in Italy.

[2] A heathen panegyrist says: "What God, what present Deity inspired thee, when almost all thy generals not only murmured in secret, but openly expressed their fears, against the advice of men, against the warnings of auspices," etc., etc.: "omnibus fere Comitibus et Ducibus, non solùm tacitè mussantibus, sed omen aperte timentibus."

[3] Euseb. *de vit. Constant.* i. 26–30, 36: Socrat. *Eccl. Hist.* i. 2. Lactantius mentions only, that "Constantine was told in a dream to put the sign *on the arms* of his soldiers:" *de Mort. Pers.* 44; which is an addition, not a contradiction, to the story as related by Eusebius. So the heathen Nazarius, *in Panegyr. ad C.* 14: "It was bruited all through the Gauls, that *armies were seen* which de-

and more credible than any of the theories which have been framed in explanation of his extraordinary conduct.

His course explained.

From his father Constantius and his mother Helena, and from his own observation of the terrible doom of those who had opposed themselves to the Gospel, he had imbibed as much of Christian faith as a liberal and sagacious but not scrupulous mind could be expected to receive. This was not much; but it was enough to make him ponder the weakness of human strength, and to pray for the support of an overruling Power. Maxentius, under the same circumstances, had resorted to horrible sacrifices and demoniacal incantations. Constantine, too enlightened for such superstitions, could only turn with vague desire, though with little of the faith that springs from love, towards

clared they were divinely sent," etc.: which, again, is not a contradiction, but a popular exaggeration. Many modern critics, such as Milman, Neander, Gieseler, Schröckh, Manso, ascribe the wonder partly to excited imagination, partly to the appearance of some brilliant cross-like phenomenon in the heavens: a mode of explanation as hard to understand, and not a whit easier to believe, than the original simple facts as related by Constantine. It gives new names to things, however, and has the merit of being thought philosophical. As to Milman's and Mosheim's objection, that the story presents "the meek and peaceful Jesus" as "a God of battles;" there is a sufficient answer in Isaiah, xlv. 1–7. It is the Lord who "holds the right hand" of the conqueror, "to subdue nations before him," and to work deliverance for His people. God is in history, and in the world, as well as in Grace. It has also been urged, that if the appearance had been really supernatural, Constantine's conversion would have been more genuine than it seems to have been. But this is to mistake the operation of "signs and wonders." Their utmost effect is to *convince the mind* (as in the case of Simon Magus), not necessarily to convert the heart. As to the particular wonder under discussion, the position of the Church at that time was a *dignus vindice nodus*. Believers everywhere had been ten years (nay, three hundred years) crying to the Lord for deliverance. That the deliverance, when it came, should be signalized by extraordinary tokens of the Hand that wrought it, seems to me a rational as well as religious belief.

the great Deity whose hand he recognized in the startling events of his times, the mysterious God of the Christians. It was then, according to his own testimony, that a wonderful vision was vouchsafed. About midday or a little after, there appeared in the heavens, just above the sun, the trophy of a Cross of light, bearing the inscription, By This Conquer. This was witnessed also by the whole army. In his sleep the night following, Christ appeared to him with the same sign, and commanded him to have a standard made in the same image, and to use it in all engagements against his enemies. In accordance with this instruction the far-famed *Labarum* was made; and when the conqueror entered Rome, his first act was to set up in that proud city the trophy of the Cross, surmounted by the ☧, so often conspicuous afterwards in the van of the Roman armies.

His vision.

The Labarum.

The readiness with which the Romans acquiesced in this momentous revolution, is not less wonderful than the boldness and decision with which it was brought about. That zeal for polytheism was by no means extinct in the great metropolis, had been recently shown by a furious outbreak in vindication of the honor of the popular goddess Fortuna. Some soldier, it appears, had uttered a word depreciatory of the idol.[4] It had required the utmost efforts of Maxentius to put an end to the tumult that ensued. But on the entrance of Constantine into the city, this zeal for paganism seems suddenly to have died away. Amid a general approbation, a sect never strong in numbers, generally disliked, and for three hundred years depressed, whose foremost Bishop had

Rome submits to the Cross.

[4] Whether this soldier was a Christian is not mentioned: Zosim. *Hist.* ii. 13.

lately been forced to act the part of groom[5] in the imperial stables, is suddenly elevated to the height of power; the traditions of a thousand years or more are quietly set aside; and an entirely new order of things is triumphantly initiated.

General rejoicing.

However all this may be explained by political or philosophic reasons, it is not to be wondered at that the Christians should have regarded it in the light of a great deliverance; a divine intervention the more welcome that it came at their hour of utmost need. And such undoubtedly was their universal feeling. From the one end of Christendom to the other there was one harmonious cry: The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice! Even the cold and phlegmatic historian of the period, the cautious and (if all reports be true) timorous Eusebius,[6] was warm-

[5] Such is said to have been the punishment of Pope Marcellus: Anastas. *Vit. Marcell.* Eusebius refers to this or some similar case in *Mart. of Palest.* xii.

[6] Eusebius, surnamed Pamphilus, and known as "the father of Church history," was not only a man of great industry and learning, with every facility for acquiring a just knowledge of the events he describes, but singularly cautious, skeptical, without a spark of the dangerous light of genius, and little in harmony with the enthusiasm of the age in which he lived. Born in Palestine about the year 259, and educated in the latitudinarian school of Origen and his disciples, he kept within the pale of orthodoxy, but sympathized with those who were out of the pale. He was imprisoned during the great persecution; but having been let off without scars, he was both privately suspected and publicly accused (on insufficient grounds, however) of having purchased his immunity by dishonorable concessions. When the peace came, he was made Bishop of Cæsarea. In the Arian strife he shuffled a little, but finally subscribed to the Nicene Creed. He was a favorite of Constantine, and on the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch, was offered that See; but prudently declined the dangerous honor. On the whole, judging him, not by the severe rule of the early Church, but by a charity fifteen hundred years older and proportionably more indulgent, he was a moderate and prudent, and (so far as we can judge) a pious and good man. His credit as a historian deservedly stands high. His prejudices were for the most part against that

ed up into a glow of sympathetic feeling. His Panegyric on the Rebuilding of the Churches shows, in its very extravagance of language, that the joy of the day could be content with no moderate expressions. The general delight, in fact, was a sort of intoxication. The cry was no longer, "We have heard with our ears what our forefathers have told us;" but, "As we have heard *so have we seen* in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God." The destruction, root and branch, within so short a space of time, of so many powerful oppressors, could not but create a feeling of awe and admiration. And, happily, this feeling was one in which the heathen could take part. They had been sufferers with the Christians; they had reason to rejoice with them. They could join in the exulting cry:[7] "Where now are the mighty names so famous among the nations? Where are the Jovii and Herculii, titles so insolently assumed by Diocles and Maximian, and so piti-

Causes of joy to the heathen.

party, which finally proved dominant in the Church; and where they come in, he has not the rhetorical skill to conceal them. His way of relating Constantine's vision and similar wonders, shows that credulity was not among his failings. Gibbon objects to him, that in two places of his history he avows an intention to record only the transactions that he deemed creditable to the Church. Whoever will read those passages (Lib. viii. 2, and *Mart. of Palest.* 12) will see, that he merely declines to *particularize* certain scandals, which, however, he fully mentions in the gross, and in a way more damaging on the whole than if he had given the details. His care to apprise the reader when he omits any facts of that kind, is a strong proof of his scrupulous fidelity; and it would be an improvement on the general character of history, if all historians were to adopt the same rule.

[7] Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* l., lii. The abominable character of these tyrants as described by the two Church historians is fully borne out by the heathen Zosimus: *Hist.* ii. It is remarkable, by the way, that Gibbon and Milman, who take every opportunity to discredit the two Church historians, refer to Zosimus—whose fanatical hatred of Christianity leads him to the most absurd statements—without a word of censure or of caution. See Gibbon, ch. xvi., and Milman's notes.

fully disgraced by their infamous successors? The Lord hath destroyed them and wiped them from the earth. It is the Lord's triumph, the victory of the Lord. He hath looked down upon the earth. His flock, torn and scattered by ravening wolves, He hath brought together and healed. The wicked beasts, which trampled down His pastures and dissipated His folds, He hath utterly exterminated!" It was, in fact, a triumph of humanity. And if Christians carefully collected the particulars of the horrible end of the oppressors, "lest either they should be forgotten, or lest some future historian should corrupt the truth, by passing over in silence their sins against God, and God's judgments upon them;" and if in this we can discern a little excess of natural exultation: it is but just to bear in mind, that the early Christians were men of like passions with ourselves, but tried in a way that passes our experience, and almost our conceptions. The real wonder is, that a triumph so great, so sudden and so unexpected, led to no acts of violent reprisal. A victory of such magnitude, and yet so little abused, is nowhere else recorded in the history of mankind.

Exultation natural and excusable.

At the present day we can see that this first victory of Christianity was not so much a fulfilment, as a type or earnest, of that subjection of the kingdoms of the world, which after so many ages of varied conflict is still but a matter of patient faith and hope. It was not the end of war. It was the beginning of a new and more complicated struggle. As, in the first victorious stage of the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had only to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,"[8] but in later stages were

The victory an earnest only.

[8] Exod. xiv. 13.

obliged to use their own arms; or, as in the conquest of the seven nations, Jericho the type-city was taken without a blow from man, but, in the capture of Ai and other places the People—having corrupted themselves by taking of "the accursed thing"[9]—were compelled to resort continually to the use of human weapons: so it has proved in the militant progress of the Church. The first great victory was a free gift of God: a victory of simple faith. The people stood still and saw the Lord work. They quietly waited till the bulwarks of Roman heathenism crumbled and fell before them. But since that time, corrupted more or less with the wealth of the first conquest, it has been comparatively a warfare of mixt elements: human strength, human policy, spoils of Ai, snares of Gibeon, and that root of all the evil "the Babylonish garment," concealing as it were the Lord's arm from view, and making the Church almost undistinguishable from the world.

A warfare of mixt elements.

The symptoms of this change were not slow in appearing. Almost the first greeting that came to the weak faith or to the politic calculations of the victor, was from a broken and distracted Christianity. The mad schism of the Donatists appealed to an earthly conqueror to settle spiritual disputes.[10] The most desperate and bloody wars[11]

Signs of a new era.

[9] Josh. vii.

[10] Constantine's edict, on this occasion, is given with many others in Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* lib. x.

[11] The violence of the Circumcelliones and the religious wars in Africa are vividly described in Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, iii. 1. In addition to the Donatist trouble there was the schism of Meletius, with the outbreak of Arianism, quarrels among the Bishops, and innumerable other troubles, to shake the faith of a new convert. The divine caution, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be *offended* in Me," was never more needed than in the moment of the first great victory.

that troubled Constantine's reign, were levied against him in the name of the religion he had adopted. Similar difficulties encountered Licinius in the East; and, if he had any faith, contributed to shake it.

Licinius led to favor Christianity.

This latter Emperor, in his contest with Maximin previously narrated, had inclined to the Christian cause from motives similar to those by which Constantine had been determined. He could put no confidence in the gods of Galerius and Maxentius. An alliance with Constantine, cemented by a marriage with his sister Constantia which took place at Milan not long after the overthrow of Maxentius, helped to commit him more decidedly in the same direction. In addition to this, he is said to have had a dream just before his decisive battle with Maximin, which induced him to pray to the Most High, and in His Name to cope with an army twice the number of his own. However this may be, his victory was followed by edicts,[12] not merely of toleration but of the most ample restitution. Churches, cemeteries and property of all kinds were to be restored fully and without delay. In return, Christians were to pray that the Divine favor, already so signally experienced by the Emperor, might be continued for all time to him and his successors.

Edicts of Restitution, A. D. 313.

War between the two Emperors, A. D. 315.

The war that soon broke out from the mutual jealousy of the two Emperors, put an end for the time being to this happy state of things.[13] Constan-

[12] Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* xlviii; Euseb. x. 5. The edict from Milan had been drawn up previously to the victory over Maximin, but was not put forth in the East till after that event. As the one given by Euseb. refers to a previous one not extant, Licinius probably made some additions to the original drawn up at Milan.

[13] Zosimus lays the blame of this war to the perfidy and am-

tine's vigor proved superior, in two fiercely contested battles, to the tried skill and more numerous forces of his veteran adversary. A hollow peace ensued. The victor was confirmed in his allegiance to Christianity. The vanquished, sorely galled by his defeat and irritated continually by the praises too lavishly bestowed upon his rival, began to hate the cause which self-interest alone had induced him to take up. His wrath was freely vented upon the Churches and the Clergy. He accused them of praying for Constantine more earnestly than for him. Persecution began once more to lower upon the East. The assemblies of the faithful appeared again in the light of conspiracies. Synods were forbidden. Even the favorite work of charity, the ministering to those in prison, could be performed only at the risk of sharing the doom of malefactors. In some places, Churches were demolished. In others, Bishops were made away with in secret. In short, Maximin and Maxentius seemed to have revived in the person of an old man more able than those tyrants, but not less cruel or licentious. At length a breach with Constantine, in which the latter perhaps made zeal for Christianity a cloak for his own ambitious views, accompanied with prodigious preparations both by sea and land, threatened the exhaustion of what remained of the resources of the Empire. Constantine proved once more victorious. The great battle of Hadrianople shattered the land forces of Licinius. The siege and capture of Byzantium involved the ruin of his navy. A vigorous rally was followed by

New outrages.

Second War.

bition of Constantine. On such points party prejudices were too strong to allow us, in cases where motives are concerned, to attach much weight to the testimony of either heathen or Christian writers.

an overwhelming defeat at Chrysopolis, now called Scutari; and the flight and ignominious submission of the tyrant, with his pardon at the instance of Constantia his wife, proved but the forerunners of his summary execution, on such pleas of state necessity as a victorious monarch is seldom at a loss to find.

End of Licinius, A. D. 324.

Such was the end of Diocletian's policy. After thirty-seven years of divided rule, with incalculable losses, horrors and calamities, the Roman world was once more united, and the first Christian Emperor reigned with universal and undivided sway.

Constantine sole emperor.

Constantine attributed his victory, as usual, to the power of the Deity of the Christians. And this, so far as we have the means of judging, was for a while at least the sum of his religion. His clear and hardy intellect, thoroughly awake (as was the case with the heathen mind in general[14]) to a sense of that awful Nemesis which rules in the affairs of dynasties and nations, had been led to identify this great and mysterious power with the cause of a universally hated and persecuted sect. He had in some way perceived that the power of Divine retribution was on their side. Their God was more mighty than the gods of the persecutors. This he saw as a simple fact; and to that fact as seen in the sphere of politi cal enterprise he readily submitted. Having always believed—to use his own expression—"that the best

He gives God the glory.

[14] The reader of Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus and even Plutarch, knows how deep and real was this belief in a divine power of retribution, sure-footed though sometimes slow, among the ancient heathen. It was the divine witness in the heathen conscience to the unity of the Godhead. The barrenness of mind which recognizes no Providence in History, no controlling Power, is peculiar to modern unbelief; and is conceivable only under such circumstances as those alluded to in the Epistle to the Hebrews, v. 4–8. For some interesting facts on Constantine's belief, see Gieseler, §56.

and noblest course of action is, before any thing is undertaken, *to provide as far as possible for a secure result*," he watched the almighty Hand which was then shaping the world's destiny, and that Hand he followed as the only sufficient pledge of security and success. His rule of action.

Such a faith, sometimes degenerating into a mere fatalism and sometimes rising to the height of a sublime confidence in God, is characteristic of all great instruments of political or social revolutions; and is consistent with gross ignorance of the Gospel and gross negligence of its precepts. Men of this kind are often hard, shrewd and selfish in all secondary matters. But in view of the great ends of their vocation, they are unsparing of themselves, enthusiastic and even fanatical, seldom descending to the littleness of prudential calculations on their own account. Their private character, therefore, is always more or less of an enigma. In the case of Constantine, his later years were subject to a series of Divine visitations, which, so far as we may reverentially look into the secret purposes of God, seem to have been intended to lead him from a political into a personal knowledge of the Truth; and which, we may charitably hope, were not without effect. The Nemesis which he dreaded, and which in state affairs he so carefully propitiated, was allowed to enter his own house.[15] Dark crimes and darker judgments Intellectual faith. Trials and sorrows.

[15] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. xviii. Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* iv. 60–64. It is instructive to contrast the Life of Constantine by the courtly Bishop of Cæsarea, with the simple inspired records, transcripts as it were from the Book of the recording Angel, of the lives of Solomon and David. Eusebius is all eulogy. We feel, nevertheless, that he belittles his hero by his fulsome praises. On the other hand, what dignity of character beams through the

caused his palace to be haunted with horrors worthy of the old tragic drama; and the life, which rose with so stern a beauty upon the profligate Roman world,[16] went down amid a gloom, in which a late baptism and perhaps a genuine though late repentance are the only evidence of a hope in keeping with the faith so long professed.

His end.

But these are questions which history is incompetent to settle. Constantine was simply a great instrument in the hand of God. To God he gave the glory, by a firm advocacy of the Gospel, if not in the better way of a consistent Christian life. He stands, therefore, as not merely the introducer, but in some sort the type, of that new era of Church growth, in which, while the root of faith remained, its true development was to be mixt, and almost inextricably entangled, with the weeds and thorns and tares of the elements of the world. In him began, in short, the great problem and enigma of our modern Christendom, our modern civilization.

The type of a new age.

blotted history of those ancient Hebrew kings! If Constantine's crimes and faults had been as honestly given by Eusebius, we should probably have found more to admire in him than we can now find warrant for. There is a counterpoise, however, to the extravagant eulogies of Eusebius, in the elegant lampoon (entitled history) of the fanatical heathen Zosimus: *Historiæ Novæ*, etc.

[16] Among the virtues conceded to him, chastity is prominent; among his vices, cruelty. Considering the fearful profligacy of the times, a man in his position could hardly maintain the former of these, without falling more or less into the latter.

THE END.

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